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December 11, 2000

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Market Watch: A Financial Look at the Games Business

By Ben Rinaldi

The videogame business is going through what many financial analysts term a "transition period," and although many of these same analysts would agree that the industry is poised for renewed growth in the next 12 months, it's evident that publishers big and small are feeling the pinch. Overall, hardware and software game sales have fallen off dramatically through the first three quarters of 2000 compared to the same period a year ago. The long-awaited arrival of Sony's PlayStation 2 console helped jumpstart sales for the retail and gaming communities, but is it too little too late?

Let's take a look at how some of the industry's major players fared during this turbulent period.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

EA's overall revenues were down for its second fiscal quarter 2001. Consolidated net revenues for the second quarter were $219.9 million, compared to $338.9 million reported for the same quarter of the prior fiscal year. Pro-forma consolidated net loss in the quarter, before goodwill and non-cash charges, was $35 million compared to pro-forma net income, before goodwill and non-cash charges, of $20.1 million in the same quarter of the prior year. Pro-forma consolidated loss per share, excluding goodwill and non-cash charges, was $0.27 compared to earnings per share, reported on the same basis, of $0.15 in the same quarter of the prior year. Larry Probst, EA's chairman/CEO, blamed the poor showing on the current platform transition, commenting, "As anticipated, the second quarter was a challenging quarter as we moved through the seasonally slow summer prior to the introduction of PlayStation 2."

NINTENDO

In Japan, Nintendo reported a recovery in profits for the past six months of its fiscal year.

Nintendo's parent-only current profit in the April through September period have more than doubled, even though sales dropped about 26 percent to 140 billion yen (approximately $1.25 billion), as the yen's appreciation against the dollar decreased the value of overseas sales, which account for about 78 percent of the company's sales. Pre-tax profits for the period rose to 51.79 billion yen (approximately $468.4 million), significantly more than last year's 20 billion yen (approximately $180.9 million). For Nintendo's full fiscal year, which ends March 31, 2001, it forecasts a 78 billion yen (approximately $705.5 million) group net profit on sales of 500 billion yen (approximately $4.52 billion).

INTERPLAY

For the quarter ended September 30, 2000, Interplay reported net revenues of $31.6 million, a surprising 34 percent increase over net revenues of $23.6 million for the same period a year ago. Operating income was $1.1 million versus a loss of $16.1 million in the same quarter a year ago.

IDSA Says the Best Days are Ahead

By Bryan Intihar

In the 11.6.00 issue of *GameWEEK*, one story discussed how the analysts of Southwest Securities strongly believed that the interactive entertainment industry was well on its way to bouncing back and having a profitable future. The trade association of the industry, the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), has now reiterated this point.

First off, the IDSA expected that 2000 would be a slower year profit-wise because of the console transition, but that now the industry is poised to recover and can continue to

(continued on page 4)

Michigan Attorney General Follows Ryan's Lead

By Bryan Intihar

Back in the spring, Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan conducted a "sting" operation that revealed to the public that young children were able to very easily purchase violent videogames. As a result of Ryan's "sting," the focus of how violent videogames were getting into the hands of youngsters had somewhat shifted to the country's retailers. This past month, another "sting" was conducted in the state of Michigan. The results of this one demonstrate that some retailers are still not restricting "Mature" rated game sales.

Recently, Michigan Attorney General Jennifer M. Granholm spoke about the need for retailers in the state to readily enforce the rating system of the Entertainment Software Review Board (ESRB). During her announcement, she talked about the informal "shopping sting" she and her staff conducted. Much like Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan, Granholm had young children try to purchase "Mature"

Michigan Attorney General Jennifer M. Granholm

(continued on page 4)

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Continued From Cover

Market Watch: A Financial Look at the Games Business

"We're extremely pleased that we have returned Interplay to operating profitability for this quarter," said Brian Fargo, Interplay's chairman and CEO. "Our revenue growth of approximately 34 percent over the same quarter last year was due to new title releases in the quarter, as well as re-orders of previously released titles. *Baldur's Gate II* on PC, *Star Trek New Worlds* on PC and *Caesar's Palace 2000* on Dreamcast were all released this quarter. *Icewind Dale* on PC, as well as *Caesar's Palace 2000* on PlayStation, both of which were released last quarter, continue to be strong sellers for us."

3DO

Revenues for 3DO during the fiscal second quarter were $22.9 million, an increase of 11 percent, compared to $20.7 million in the prior year's fiscal second quarter. Pro-forma consolidated net loss in the quarter before warrant expense was $15.2 million, compared to a loss of $5.9 million in the same quarter last year. On an as-reported basis, the net loss was $16.7 million. Revenues for the fiscal first half were $30.8 million, compared to $33.8 million in the prior fiscal year. As-reported net loss for the first six months of the fiscal year was $43.0 million, compared to $12.7 million, for the same period last year.

Trip Hawkins, the company's chairman/CEO, said, "Despite ongoing industry pricing pressure and market slowness prior to the introduction of PlayStation 2, we were pleased with the quarter and our revenue and the operating loss were in line with our expectations."

ACTIVISION

No software publisher has enjoyed more success this year than Activision. Successful launches of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*, *Spider-Man* and *X-Men Mutant Academy*, plus the continued success of the original *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, has helped the company achieve record financials for the second quarter, ended September 30 2000.

Net revenues for the second fiscal quarter increased to $144.4 million from $115.4 million for the second quarter of the last fiscal year. Operating income rose 170 percent to $9.5 million, as compared with $3.5 million for the same period last year. Net income grew to $4.3 million, compared with a net income of $1.1 million for the comparable period last year.

Moving forward, Robert Kotick, Activision's co-chairman/CEO, said, "We are optimistic about our continued market momentum. We have two titles for the PlayStation 2 for this holiday season—*Orphen: Scion of Sorcery* and *Sky Odyssey*—and 12 other games in development, including four extreme sports titles. We believe that both *Orphen* and *Sky Odyssey* will be leading titles for the new platform.

MIDWAY

Midway has fallen on hard times of late. Fiscal 2001 first quarter revenues decreased 55.7 percent to $47.3 million, compared with $106.6 million in the prior year period. In addition, Midway reported a net loss of $9.9 million, compared to net income of $11.3 million in the prior year period. The company blames the decline in revenues and overall profitability on sluggish Dreamcast software sales. Revenues related to Sega's console decreased 87% to $4,583,000 in the fiscal 2001 first quarter from $34,107,000 in the prior year period.

CAPCOM

Capcom announced its fiscal half-year financial results with a total operating profit of 2.4 billion yen (approximately $21.78 million).

The Japanese game company saw domestic operating profits dip down to 0.9 billion yen (approximately $8.16 million), or 65% lower than the same period last year. The news wasn't all bad for Capcom as its North American subsidiary excelled due to its low overhead and brisk software sales of *Dino Crisis 2* (PlayStation) and *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* (Dreamcast).

Capcom also forecasts that its total operating profit for the full year ending March 2001 will be approximately 8.6 billion yen (approximately $78.06 million) or 5% less than last year. **GW**

Read All About It: Japanese News Source Goes International!

By Ben Rinaldi

Japan is the videogame Mecca of the world so it's only fitting that Famitsu.com, a leading videogame news provider read religiously by more than 80 percent of Japanese game-playing fanatics, has gone global.

Thanks to a partnership between Famitsu's parent company Enterbrain, Inc. and Ubi Soft subsidiary GameLoft, gamers from all over the world can now go online to http://us.famitsu.gameloft.com and read about the latest videogame-related news and developments in the Land of the Rising Sun. The agreement calls for Enterbrain to extract news, sales charts, etc. from Famitsu.com and translate it to English. GameLoft will then translate the information into regional languages and distribute it in real time from Japan to the rest of the world via its portal sites.

The decision to produce and distribute overseas editions of Famitsu.com was a no-brainer for Famitsu editor-in-chief Ricky Tanimoto, who told GameWEEK: "Many people have asked me to publish an English version of Famitsu. Some of them have even taken Japanese classes just to be able to understand the magazine. However, now that the Internet has become such a part of our everyday life, I have decided to start an international version of Famitsu online. My hope is that the site will not only correspond news and data, but also, Japanese game culture. We at Famitsu believe games not only entertain, but also have become part of our lives."

GameLoft will distribute Famitsu in six countries throughout North America and Europe including U.S.A., Canada, Italy, France, Spain, and Denmark. An additional 17 countries will be added by spring 2001. **GW**

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GameWEEK EDITORIAL

By Ben Rinaldi
GameWEEK Senior Editor
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Y2K Slump?

For videogame aficionados, the year 2000 was about as exciting as an Al Gore/George Bush presidential debate (Zzzzzzzzz...). Sure the launch of PlayStation 2 was exciting...for about five minutes. Sony was fortunate that "the biggest launch in the history of consumer electronics" didn't turn into the "biggest nightmare in the history of consumer electronics." Criticisms for not delivering sufficient hardware units to satisfy demand and lack of quality PS2 software overshadowed an otherwise successful debut. Luckily for Sony, it seems consumer demand for the console has not waned and, barring any unforeseen disasters, PS2 should establish itself as the premiere next-gen game machine next year.

Outside of the PS2 launch it was business as usual for the other major players. Sega continued to push Dreamcast and finally got around to introducing its online gaming network SegaNet. Although the company gets kudos for being the first to deliver online game play to the home console market, Dreamcast's small installed base and limited selection of online-enabled games has kept SegaNet from becoming a mass-market success. Nintendo finally got around to showing off its Gamecube and Game Boy Advance (GBA) systems, but then decided to quickly (and predictably) clam up and not say anything further until E3. Microsoft used 2000 to announce its planned entry into the videogame business with Xbox but it too revealed little about the system.

Overall, the industry is expected to show a slight decline when the final sales numbers are tallied. Our friends at PC Data are reporting that estimated year-end 2000 videogame sales would total approximately $6.6 billion - down from last year's record total $6.925 billion.

The introduction of three new systems (GBA, Gamecube and Xbox) will, at the very least, ensure that the Y2K slump is not repeated in 2001 and *GameWEEK* will be there to cover all the exciting news and developments as they happen.

From the entire *GameWEEK* staff: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Continued from the Cover

Michigan Attorney General Follows Ryan's Lead

rated games from local retailers.

The operation consisted of volunteers from the Attorney General's office escorting eight children (ranging from ages nine to 13) to stores around the state to see if a "Mature" rated game could be purchased. Granholm reported that in 31 instances, the game was sold to a young child. The retail chains that were visited were as follows: Babbages, Best Buy, Circuit City, CompUSA, Kmart, MediaPlay, Meijer, OfficeMax, Staples, Target, Toys R US and Wal-Mart. During this "sting," the only two that did not allow the child to purchase the game were Babbages and Target. Rental shops were also part of the operation as four Blockbuster Videos and one Mammoth Video enabled a youngster to rent the "Mature" rated game. A letter containing the results of the sting was then sent out to each retailer once again asking them to enforce the ESRB rating system and refuse ESRB rating system and refuse sales of violent games to young children. In her speech, Granholm stated, "Violence in this country is a global problem, and it deserves a global solution. In the case of violent videogames, the manufacturers have done their part by allowing their games to be rated. Parents certainly have to do their part to use those ratings to choose games that are appropriate for their families. Now Michigan's retailers must step up to the plate and become part of the solution, too." Simply put, Granholm wants the retailers in the state of Michigan to take a proactive approach.

Following the results of the "sting," some retailers have already spoken with Granholm and are attempting to make modifications in their stores to help eliminate the chance of a young child purchasing the "Mature" rated game. Those stores are Meijer, Kmart, OfficeMax and Wal-Mart. This has pleased the Michigan Attorney General, but she still wants more retailers to commit to changing their policies. "Those retailers who have made an effort to be part of the solution deserve our praise," said Granholm. "But where are the rest of you? Too many major national retailers like Toys R Us, Best Buy, Circuit City and CompUSA have been silent on the issue."

Here is a laundry list of what the Attorney General is asking retailers to do:

- "Adopt or expand existing 'We Card' policies to check age or require parental permission before selling or renting 'R-rated,' 'Explicit,' 'Adult,' 'Adults Only,' or 'Mature' labeled products."
- "Inform the public of their policies through appropriate displays and advertising."
- "Clearly and conspicuously display all industry ratings and advisories on their products and in advertising and displays."
- "Implement a reliable system of age verification for all sales of mature products."

However, even with the results of these two "sting" operations, it still comes down to each and every individual retailer and their willingness to enforce the rating system. Everyday, retailers struggle with what is more important, the sale or the principle, and not even Attorney General Ryan or Granholm can control that. **GW**

Continued from the Cover

IDSA Says the Best Days are Ahead

grow. In addition, the IDSA sees this transition to be much smoother than the one that happened back in 1994-1995. Douglas Lowenstein, president of the IDSA, said, "As expected, 2000 was a soft year compared to the industry's double-digit growth rates through the mid and late nineties.... On the other hand, compared to the previous transition year of 1994-1995, the industry proved more resilient and entrenched. With more new technology advances on the horizon, growing online game revenue opportunities, and ever more advanced artistry and creativity by developers, the videogame industry will perhaps be the most important entertainment median in this new century."

The IDSA also polled many game company CEOs on questions pertaining to the future of the industry (the CEOs that took part of the survey account for more than 75 percent of the industry sales numbers in one year). According to the survey, the CEOs expect sales to increase in 2001 by at least 11 percent and could even go as high as 15-20 percent. The IDSA added that "based on historical patterns...expect sales to grow 20 percent or more between 2002-2004, lifting total U.S. videogame software sales to more than ten billion dollars."

Another part of the survey by the IDSA asked CEOs to comment on what type of presence online gaming would have in the coming years. Those results were mixed. While 55 percent saw online gaming to be a necessity for their company, they also did not expect it to produce a huge amount of revenue any time soon. The IDSA reports that "an equal number believe revenues from online games will not exceed 20 percent of their company's revenue until at least 2004, with many saying that it will be several years later. The CEOs said the major obstacle to realizing the full potential of the Internet is the development of profitable revenue models for online games." Now Sony Computer Entertainment America has been preaching since E3 that the "broadband revolution" is right around the corner. Yet, according to these figures it may be a while before online gaming, especially in the console market becomes a major source of revenue for the companies in the interactive entertainment industry. Sega is currently the only major console player who has created an online community and its success still not been determined.

Lastly, the IDSA also polled the CEOs on what they think of the videogame industry compared to other forms of entertainment. Not surprisingly—since their paychecks depend on the success of games—approximately "three out of four (73 percent) of the CEOs agree that computer and videogames will be the most important art form of the 21st century." Reasons for this optimism include an expansive user demographic, increased presence of next-generation consoles in homes, the development of the online gaming market and further advances in game technology.

As the year 2000 comes to a close, many gaming companies are looking forward to next year. What was first discussed by Southwest Securities is now reaffirmed by the IDSA; 2001 and the years beyond should produce larger profit numbers for companies in the game industry. **GW**

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Sega Opens its Vault, Brings Genesis Games to Dreamcast

Clever marketing ploy or act of desperation?

By Jim Loftus

In an attempt to generate added interest in its Dreamcast console, Sega of America has decided to crack open its vault and put some of its 16-bit material back to work. In January, the company will begin offering consumers a new Dreamcast bundle option under the name "Smash Pack." Sega's upcoming hardware package will include a Dreamcast console, one controller and a compilation disc loaded with classic Genesis game titles. The company's plan is to offer a total of ten best-selling 16-bit Genesis games on the disc: *Altered Beast*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Revenge of Shinobi*, *Streets of Rage 2*, *Golden Axe*, *Columns*, *Phantasy Star II*, *Vectorman*, *Shining Force*, and *Wrestle War*. During a recent press-only event held in San Francisco, Charles Bellfield, Sega's VP of communications, told *GameWEEK* "Our company has an incredible legacy of content which started in the arcade, progressed to the Genesis and is now apparent today on Dreamcast. With this bundle, Sega is giving gamers not only a bit of nostalgia, but even more reason to purchase Dreamcast."

In addition to ten retro-game selections, Sega is including *Sega Swirl*, a Dreamcast puzzle game that has been available free to consumers for months via demo discs; and a visually enhanced port of *Virtua Cop 2*, a light gun compatible game that was released for the Saturn back in 1996.

We contacted Sega's Gaming PR Manager, Heather Hawkins, for more details on the impending bundle. When asked whether a Genesis compilation disc would also be made available to consumers as a stand-alone SKU, Hawkins answered "It's something we're looking into, but right now there are no plans to release it solo."

***Sega hopes to intrigue today's demographic with the very "stuff" that put them on the map ten years ago: namely, 16-bit titles such as* Phantasy Star II, Sonic the Hedgehog, Revenge of Shinobi *and* Altered Beast.**

We also asked about the product's target audience and if there was any danger the package might be percieved as a desperate attempt by Sega to lure retro gaming fans to Dreamcast. "It's not that way at all," Hawkins explains. "Sega has so much great content from the past, we thought we'd draw on it. When former Genesis fans go into the store, they'll say 'Hey...I know these games!' and it will add incentive to pick up a Dreamcast. Some may pick it up for themselves, some may think 'Hey, I'd like my kids to enjoy the same games that I enjoyed!'" Hawkins concludes "We also think we're going to reach some of the younger Genesis fans." Sega's Smash Pack bundle is scheduled to ship with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of $179.95. **GW**

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More Retailers See Holiday Sales

PS2 shortfall opens door to other platforms, PC games

By Steve Traiman

More brick-and-mortar and click-and-mortar retailers share the cautious optimism of their fellow merchants for the holiday season (*GameWEEK*, November 20 issue). While unit sales were up for the first nine months compared to last year, dollars were flat for console and computer game and accessory sales. In the wake of the initial shortfall of Sony's PlayStation 2 (PS2), most retailers see the opportunity to fill the gap with some good product from Dreamcast, N64 and Game Boy Color.

Total videogame hardware, software and accessory sales at retail were up 14% in units but only 1% in dollars, compared to the same January-September period in 1999, according to NPD TRSTS data, analyst Kristin Barnett reports. On the computer side, entertainment software was up 12% in units and 8% in dollars, but edutainment titles dropped 19% in units and 23% in dollars from the year-ago period.

Game Boy Color sparked the videogame market, with portable software up 22% in units and 18% in dollars. Next generation software, including PlayStation (PSX), N64 and Dreamcast, was 30% ahead in units and 17% in dollars.

Here's a sampling of more comments from representatives of brick-and-mortar, click-and-mortar and online game retailers, including Circuit City, Hastings Books, Music & Video, Office Depot, buy.com and half.com.

The exit of the 600-plus Circuit City stores from major appliances earlier this year has opened significant space for video and computer game software, with all stores sporting revamped layouts in early November. "Our business has changed and we're now a 'player' in the games business," emphasizes Dan Barzell, assistant vice president and division merchandise manager for software, peripherals and telecommunications. On the PS2 rollout, he observes, "You have to understand Sony's endgame. People will see it (PS2) as an entertainment center with multiple uses. We can look at every PS2 household as a potential destination for DVD movies and music CDs, as well as a game center with access to the Internet and interactive gaming." The chain also will be expanding its website offerings at www.circuitcity.com. "We've had a limited selection of software up to now," he adds, "but like anyone with an online presence, we know we can, and will, do better. "We're very excited to have a presence in the videogame and computer software and hardware markets.

At the 145 Hastings Books, Music & Video outlets, "Since we started merchandising games 'live' instead of keeping them locked up, videogame business had been pretty good across the board for the first nine months compared to last year," says Victor Fuentes, senior director, video and computer software and newsstands. With kiosks in-store for demos of all platforms and more titles, accessories and peripherals, "We're bringing more excitement to the game department," he adds. On the computer side, while *Diablo II* was a major driver for business, family and children's titles were fairly soft. Hastings has rented Dreamcast consoles and games since last September's launch and had PS2 units available in all stores on launch date at $19.99 for five days, with titles $4.99 each for the same rental period. "It's absolutely done very well and has made us very optimistic over the outlook for the holiday quarter," he says. "Any new format invigorates the market and the tight PS2 availability should open up sales for other formats. *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask* really took off for N64 and any hot title brings in more traffic, and more sales.

> *"Our business has changed... We're very excited to have a presence in the videogame and computer software and hardware markets."*
>
> *Dan Barzell, assistant vice president and division merchandise manager for software, peripherals and telecommunications, Circuit City*

The 850-plus Office Depot superstores saw videogame and computer entertainment software sales a bit ahead of the first nine months of last year, with revenue trending up from June through September anywhere from five to eight percentage points. "Our customer base is more office and productivity software focused," says Carol Martin, vice president, technology. "Game software is an impulse buy and we are providing more exposure for these titles, including a number of budget-priced offerings." The chain carries PSX and PS2, N64, Dreamcast and PC software.

Buy.com has been offering games online since the acquisition of Speedserve in mid-1998, and now has several thousand SKUs available in all formats, according to Mike Walkey, senior vice president, product management. "We're focused on the hard-core videogamer and more casual PC gamer," he says, "with a high potential for parents buying software for their kids." Business the first nine months was up slightly from last year, with the big phenomenon what he called "PS2 anticipation. Our big distributors, including Ingram and Baker & Taylor, committed product a week before the launch. Our special $449 bundle included two controllers, a selection of games and Sony Pictures' Men in Black DVD as we wanted to give our buyers a true PS2 experience. Overall, however, the PS2 shortage should have a positive impact on sales for other platforms with a lot of good titles just released or our before the holidays."

Half.com is unique as an online marketplace of buyers and sellers

Capping Another Good Year

and accessories

Above left and right: Half.com and Buy.com recently announced a partnership that will create a co-branded version of Half.com on the Buy.com site in the first quarter next year, offering used games, movies and music.

for mostly used video and computer games, audio CDs, DVD movies and books, and became a wholly-owned subsidiary of eBay in July. "Our sellers are retailers, wholesalers and distributors and our buyers are mostly consumers," says Chris Fralic, vice president, business development. Since the site launched in January, PC Data Online has reported solid increases in unique visitors, he notes. "In February we had 840,000 which made us the 705 most active site; in May it was 3.9 million as the 125th most active; and in October, eight million made us number 62, with 9.1% of all Internet visitors." At the same time, the site launched with about one million titles and has more than seven million for the holidays, with its "Most Wanted" list a good barometer of what gamers want, and a boost for preorders, he observes. Looking ahead, Half.com and Buy.com recently announced a partnership that will create a co-branded version of Half.com on the Buy.com site in the first quarter, offering used games, movies and music.

All retailers are ramping up for the holidays. At Circuit City, the Sunday newspaper sections will have greatly expanded game software and hardware offerings through December, according to Dan Barzell. The November 5 flyer had a page for PS2 and PSX, with a PS one console for $99.95; a half-page on peripherals featuring Intel's wireless mouse, keyboard and base station, and a midweek November 9 insert also highlighted Sega Dreamcast's new Jet Grind Radio with a free CD soundtrack bonus. For Office Depot, games are also getting more attention in Sunday circulars, Carol Martin notes. The November 5 flyer had a half-page offer for budget label Cosmi Software good through December 31, with a buy one, get one free, up to buy three, get five free, all at $9.99. Included were *3D Frog Frenzy*, *3V Pinball Express*, *300 Arcade Games* and *1000 Games* for Windows.

The monthly *Hastings Entertainment News* magazine goes to several hundred thousand game, movie and music customers, with game offerings expanded this year, and more than 2.5 million Holiday Gift Guides were distributed last month. "Every piece we put out emphasizes that we are a multimedia entertainment company," Victor Fuentes notes.

Buy.com launched its online Holiday Store November 1, reports Mike Walkey, with a dedicated games section offering special values in all formats through Christmas week. Half.com used a daily giveaway of a PS2 console every day in November to kick off the holiday season, with Chris Fralic noting that every visit earned a chance for the random drawing, with every dollar spent getting a bonus chance. Anyone spending $15 or more in purchases from November 14-30 got a free 20 song CD, Half.com Presents the Holiday Album. **GW**

PR INSIDER

Hints for Industry Public Relations Professionals

Sponsored by:
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Green Communications

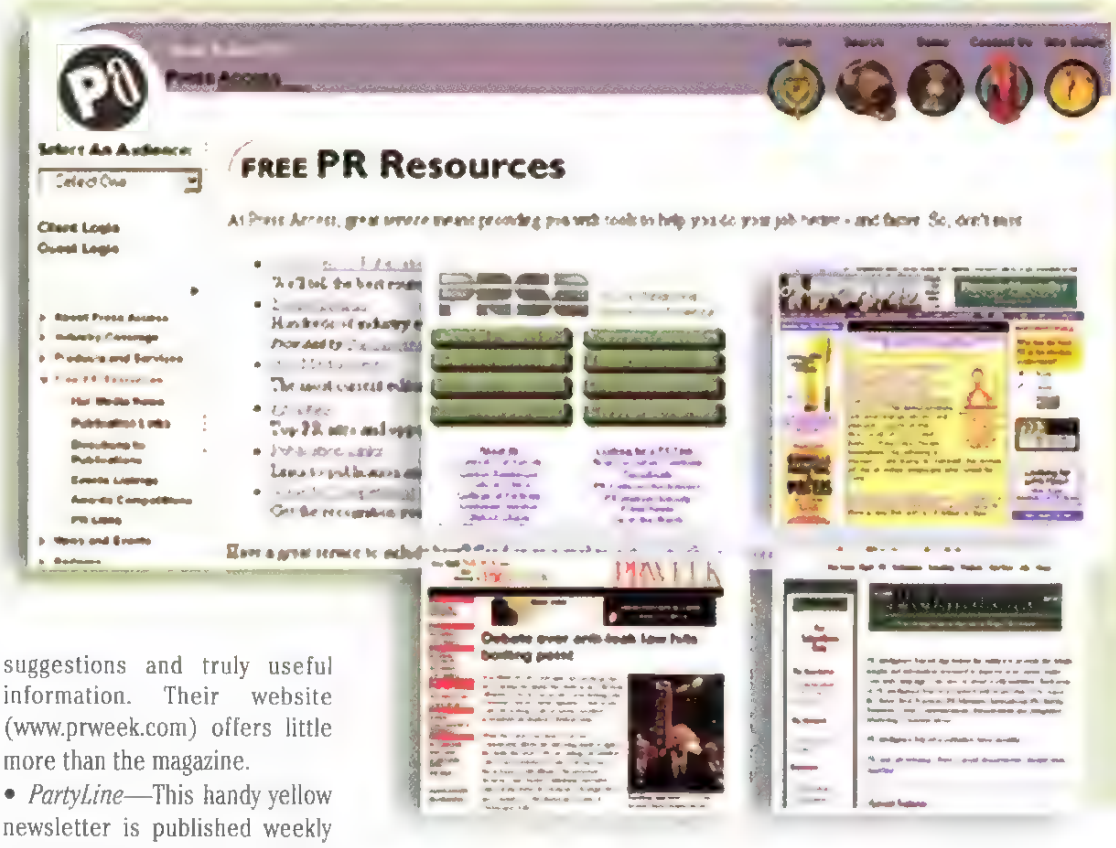
By Erica Kohnke

The Best Tools for Gaming PR

Revealing the Resources that Will Bring Your Game to the Top

Let's face it, we're outsiders. Yes, the public relations professionals working on videogames are the law-breaking "C. Thomas Howell" counterparts to most PR people in society. We have to be. We're working on products that are tough to explain to the stodgy flacks who populate most of the public relations world, and we've often got different resource needs.

For this reason, we need to pick and choose carefully from the books and resources available to all PR professionals we don't want to waste time plucking through something meant for the starchy "straights." The following list is an annotated bibliography of the best newsletters, annual reports, books and other resources currently available for people just like us. I've also noted some publications that look relevant, but may waste your valuable time.



Websites for some of the popular PR resources offer a multitude of free information as well as newsletters for PR professionals. From left to right: Press Access (large image), Public Relations Society of America (top left), O'Dwyer's PR Daily (top right), PR Week (bottom left) and Ragan's PR Intelligence Report (bottom right).

NEWSLETTERS AND MAGAZINES

• *Bulldog Reporter*—This publication is wonderful. It's published semi-monthly by the Infocom Group, and features useful editorial contact information as well as amusing pronunciation guides for editors with difficult last names. It also includes the *Bulldog Extra! Newsletter*, which frequently contains specific beat information useful in games PR. If you're going to use one resource, this should be it.

• *PR Agency Insider*—If you're working at a PR agency of any size, or have considered breaking off and starting one, *The Bulldog Reporter*'s "PR Agency Insider" newsletter, is your very best friend.

• *Ragan's PR Intelligence Report*—This newsletter is published twice monthly and includes both tactical and case study information, with a bent toward assisting agencies. More information about the report is available at www.ragan.com/pri.

• *PR Week* Although *PR Week* sounds promising, it doesn't offer much by way of resources for the gamer PR professional. There are some terrific sounding job opportunities listed in the back, and occasionally cover our industry with articles on Microsoft's big Xbox PR spend and interesting tales of scandal, but this new magazine doesn't offer much by the way of tactic suggestions and truly useful information. Their website (www.prweek.com) offers little more than the magazine.

• *PartyLine*—This handy yellow newsletter is published weekly by Morton and Betty Yarmon. Not as streamlined or relevant to gaming PR as *Bulldog Reporter*, *PartyLine* does its job well—connecting publicists with editors who need immediate leads. If you have any questions about the newsletter, the Yarmons are very accessible. The newsletter is also available via e mail.

• *PR Strategist*—Published quarterly by the PRSA, this magazine is a little thin, but has its high points, including point-counterpoint interviews and perspectives about the effects of dot-com PR on our profession. It's specifically geared toward management issues, not tactics.

• *PR Tactics*—This is PRSA's other publication, published monthly. This is a delicious, newsprint based publication available to members. See membership info under "Additional Resources." *PR Tactics* covers recent case studies and plenty of tactical information. A recent issue included articles condemning the quality of recent B Roll presentations and how to handle a Webcast. Of all the publications for PR professionals, this is the most relevant for gaming PR.

WEBSITES

• Odwyer's PR Daily www.odwyerpr.com is an excellent resource. The sidebars in particular are helpful—with book reviews and stories about the most recent media moves and scandals.

• The Public Relations Society of American collects good links on their site, www.prsa.org, and some additional advice about selecting and working with PR firms.

• Editorial Media & Marketing International also hosts an informative site, www.prcentral.com, with samples of its "Inside PR" newsletter available.

ANNUAL RELEASES

• *Bacon's*—Bacon's media directories (print and electronic) have long been publicists' bibles. They offer newspaper, magazine, radio, TV, and cable directories that include very detailed editorial information as well as a media calendar directory.

• *Press Access*—Like Bacon's, *Press Access* offers media contact info via database, and is updatable via the Web. They also distribute two very helpful newsletters, including "The Scoop," a synopsis of editorial changes and the media's current hot buttons. In addition, *Press Access* distributes an e-mail newsletter called "Press Access Hot News" with the very latest editor hires and fires.

• Media Map also offers software that allows you to manage your contacts as well as a host of other services. This kind of access can prove helpful when you're looking for media outside of the traditional gaming channels.

GREAT BOOKS

• Potentially hard to find, but worth it is *How to Publicize High Tech Products & Services* by Daniel Janal. The content is a lit-

(continued on page 12)

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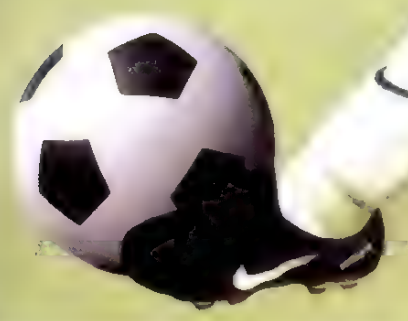

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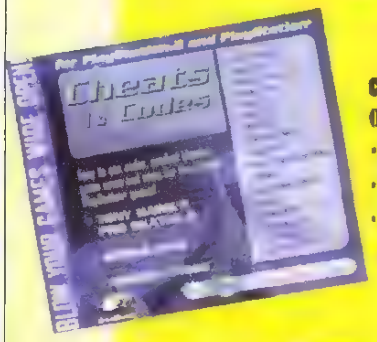

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- Over 500 cheats
- Game saves

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Continued From Page 10

The Best Tools for Gaming PR

tle dated, and not games-specific, but it's currently the only resource that focuses on our brand of PR.

• *Associated Press' Stylebook and Libel Manual*—Regularly updated, it allows you to keep the same standards used by the journalists you're working with.

• As a companion to the *Stylebook*, consider the *Handbook for Public Relations Writing*. Ever wonder whether your company's press release template is accurate, or how exactly a game's "Fact Sheet" should read? Thomas Bivin's handbook is made for you. In addition, their presskit advice is useful. Many of us "Outsiders" use FTP sites, presskits on CD, and press releases formatted for e-mail, so this book is now outdated.

• *Toxic Sludge is Good for You! Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry*—OK, I threw this one in here just for fun, it's a brilliant survey of the most evil public relations campaigns. You may get some devious ideas of your own.

• *The Marketer's Guide to Public Relations* is a survey of marketing and PR co-promotions, such as the Oscar Mayer "Wienermobile" promotion. It contains some excellent tactical information and interesting case studies, but few examples which are relevant to "Outsider" Matt Dillon-esque games PR.

• Cases in Public Relations Management by Raymond Simon and Frank Winston Wylie may be a textbook meant for communications classics, but the case studies are fascinating. How do big companies handle layoffs or sexual harrassment allegations? They go over tactics used by top PR professionals in these situations. It's crusty, but captivating—an interesting survey of problems we hope we don't experience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• If you're handling PR part-time or for a small company, make friends with a local PR agency. Some agencies will open their doors to you, offer free suggestions, and access to some of their resources, in the hope that you will refer their agency or eventually sign on as a client.

• Presentation specialists. Companies such as Decker Communications can polish up your most difficult spokesperson. In addition, they have more great resources for your library. For example, Decker publishes a book called *You've Got To Be Believed To Be Heard* about their communication methodology.

• If you're doing PR full-time, consider joining The Public Relations Society of America. (www.prsa.org). Besides seminar invitations and job-hunting resources, the PRSA can very much come in handy. They are easily accessible by phone to answer crisis questions, insurance queries, and refer you to additional resources. They've got local chapters as well as a specific "Technology" Professional Interest Segment. If you're at an agency or part of a large department, it only makes sense for one person to become a member. Dues are currently $225/year.

So good luck working with the resources that will take your products to the next level. Remember to keep your subscriptions current, be proud of "Outsider" PR, and consult the experts with a smile...every time.

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• *PartyLine* is published by Morton and Betty Yarmon in New York City. Their phone number is 212.755.3487, e-mail is byarmon@ix.netcom.com, www.partylinepublishing.com.

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• Bacon's Directories are published by Bacon's Information, a K-III Communications Company based in Chicago. Their ordering staff is available at 800.753.6675.

• Press Access is located in Boston, and their number is 617.542.6670. www.pressaccess.com.

• Media Map is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and their number is 617. 374.9300. www.mediamap.com. **GW**

Erica Kohnke is the vice president of San Francisco-based Linn Public Relations, an agency specializing in interactive entertainment.

newsbits

Take-Two Acquires Duke Nukem—Take Two Interactive has gained the publishing rights of the *Duke Nukem* franchise from Infogrames, Inc. In addition, Take-Two has given one of its subsidiaries, Gathering of Devleopers, the publishing rights to the upcoming PC title *Duke Nukem Forever*. That game will be released in the second half of 2001. Another of its subsidiaries, Rockstar Games, is planning a *Duke Nukem* game for the PlayStation 2.

Microsoft Gets Digital Anvil—Microsoft announced today that it has "reached a preliminary agreement" to acquire developer Digital Anvil. According to the terms of the agreement, Microsoft would obtain the rights to Digital Anvil projects like the highly anticipated Freelancer. Digital Anvil also has another title in development, which is slated for the Xbox. Ed Fries, vice president of games publishing for Microsoft, said, "The acquisition of Digital Anvil will strengthen our commitment to producing top-quality PC and Xbox titles...*Freelancer* is a true expression of Digital Anvil's innovative spirit. By combining our internal resources with the Digital Anvil team's development talent, we will ensure the realization of their creative visions." *Freelancer* is currently scheduled for release in the second half of 2001 for the PC.

GameFan Staff Reportedly Axed—According to sources close to *GameFan* magazine and its sister website, the entire staff was laid off December 1. Though *GameWEEK*'s calls requesting comment from the public-relations firm for Express.com—*GameFan*'s parent company—weren't returned by the time this article was posted, content on the GameFan.com site hasn't been updated since Thursday. Reportedly, Express.com is pursuing a buyer for the *GameFan* properties, which could result in a change to the unemployment status of its staff. *GameWEEK* will pass along more info on this story as it becomes available.

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–Warren Buckleitner, Children's Software Revue

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PRINT REPORT

The Retailers Guide to Game Related Publishing

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by Bryan Intihar

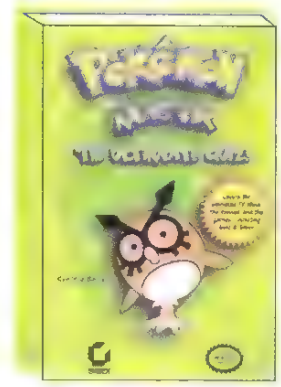
Official Fighter's Guide: Capcom vs. SNK: Millennium Fight 2000

Publisher: BradyGAMES
Platform(s) Covered: Sega Dreamcast
Availability: Now
Author(s): Brady Staff
Price: $12.99
ISBN: 0-74400-040-8
Website: www.bradygames.com

Ryu and the boys from Capcom take on the crew over at SNK in the fighting game arcade junkies have been waiting for in *Capcom vs. SNK: Millennium Fight 2000* on the Dreamcast. The staff at BradyGAMES provides a comprehensive list of each character's moves, combos and profile. Consumers are also treated to information on the game's two treacherous bosses. This guide is a must-buy for the hardcore fighting fan.

Pokémon Master: The Ultimate Quiz!

Publisher: Sybex
Platform(s) Covered: General Pokémon Knowledge
Availability: December 2000
Author(s): Cynthia Boris
Price: $9.99
ISBN: 0-7821-2904-8
Website: www.sybexgames.com



Children are able to test their Pokémon knowledge with this quiz book brought to the market by Sybex and author Cynthia Borris. The 1,000-point quiz contains a slew of trivia questions from the TV series to the two movies and even the Game Boy Games *Pokémon Blue, Red, Yellow, Gold* and *Silver*. With its relatively low price-point, *Pokémon Master: The Ultimate Quiz* is a nice stocking stuffer for your little Poké-maniac.

Official Perfect Guide: Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

Publisher: Versus Books
Platform(s) Covered: Nintendo 64
Availability: Now
Author(s): Casey Loe
Price: $12.99
ISBN: 0-9703473-6-7
Website: www.versusbooks.com

Atop many kids' wish lists this holiday is Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask*. Author Casey Loe makes sure that gamers of all ages will have an easier time completing Link's most recent adventure. In addition to a complete game walkthrough, Loe reveals the locations of every mask, heart container, fairy and gold skulltula. There are also color maps of each area of gameplay. Packed in the guide is a full-color poster.

Pokémon: Choose Your Own Pathway to Adventure

Publisher: Sybex
Platform(s) Covered: General Pokémon Knowledge
Availability: December 2000
Author(s): Alex Gray
Price: $9.99
ISBN: 0-7821-2903-X
Website: www.sybexgames.com

Are you upset that Ash chose the Snorlax instead of his favorite Pikachu? Well, Sybex and Alex Gray put the decision in the reader's hands with the book *Pokémon: Choose Your Own Pathway to Adventure*. Throughout the 128 pages, it is up to the reader to determine Ash's and his friend's fate. In addition, the book contains more than one ending so that consumers can go back and see how other decisions affect the story.

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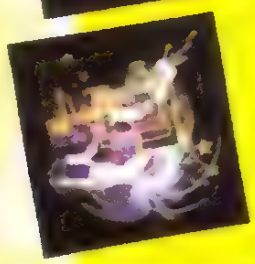

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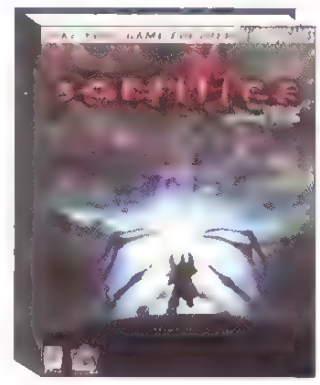
by Bryan Intihar

Official Strategy Guide: Sacrifice

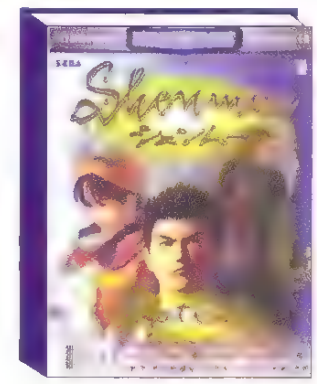
Publisher: BradyGAMES
Platform(s) Covered: PC
Availability: Now
Author(s): Craig Wessel
Price: $19.99
ISBN: 0-74400-020-3
Website: www.bradygames.com



Shiny continues to develop new and innovative products for the PC with its latest release *Sacrifice*. Most PC players will find it handy to pick up the guide by Craig Wessel so that they can have an easier time appeasing the game's gods. Wessel provides tips and walkthroughs for both the single and multiplayer experience, and discusses each of the game's 55 characters based on their abilities. There is also a list of all the weapons and spells.

Perfect Guide: Shenmue

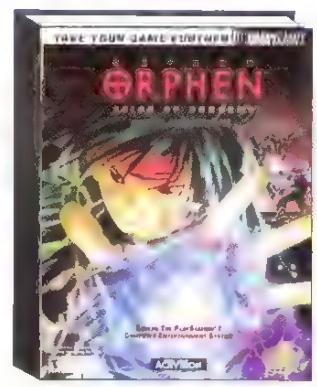
Publisher: Versus Books
Platform(s) Covered: Sega Dreamcast
Availability: Now
Author(s): Versus Books Staff
Price: $14.99
ISBN: 0-9703473-5-9
Website: www.versusbooks.com



If there were ever a game that needed a strategy guide, it would be Yu Suzuki's masterpiece *Shenmue* for the Dreamcast. Luckily, the folks at Versus Books have put together a comprehensive guide that covers all aspects of this title. The guide features maps, walkthroughs and item and move lists. More impressive are the profiles for all 350 of the game's characters. Versus also gives consumers a full-color pull out *Shenmue* poster.

Official Strategy Guide: Orphen: Scion of Sorcery

Publisher: BradyGAMES
Platform(s) Covered: PlayStation 2
Availability: Now
Author(s): Tim Bogenn
Price: $14.99
ISBN: 0-74400-035-1
Website: www.bradygames.com



Activision helps build the early PS2 library with the anime action/adventure title *Orphen: Scion of Sorcery*. The author Tim Bogenn and the staff at BradyGAMES provide consumers complete walkthroughs for every character as well as discussions on the game's three different storylines. The guide gives its readers some insight to *Orphen*'s ever-changing story that can become confusing at some points. It also lists information on *Orphen*'s playable characters and its final boss.

Official Perfect Guide: Skies of Arcadia

Publisher: Versus Books
Platform(s) Covered: Sega Dreamcast
Availability: Now
Author(s): Versus Books Staff
Price: $14.99
ISBN: N/A
Website: www.versusbooks.com

Versus Books continues its commitment toward publishing strategy guides for the Sega Dreamcast with one for the role-playing title *Skies of Arcadia* (a nice addition to the weak Dreamcast RPG library). The staff provides information on the ships as well as each character. There are full color maps of all of *Skies of Arcadia*'s environments and hints on how to acquire "GUT points." Lastly, each of the game's secrets is revealed throughout the pages of the guide.

GameWEEK Print Report is an overview of game books that are written for the consumer. Print Report is meant to provide current information regarding the book and its potential at the time of its release. It also represents the status of the book's genre and current marketability. While Print Report might be critical, it is by no means final judgment on a book and should not be solely used by retailers to base buying decisions on, as the final outcome of a book already previewed here could be completely different at its time of release if previously unavailable.

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ACCESSORY MARKET

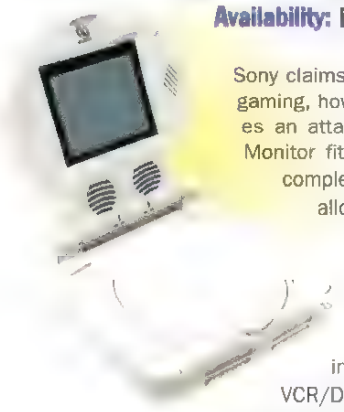
The Retailers Guide to Game-Related Peripherals

Sponsored by: nyko

by Ben Rinaldi

Mobile Monitor

Manufacturer: InterAct • **Contact:** 410.238.2424 • www.interact-acc.com
System(s): PlayStation One • **MSRP:** $149.99
Availability: December



Sony claims its newly redesigned PlayStation One is ideal for on-the-go gaming, however we all know this is not the case until someone releases an attachable LCD screen for the console. InterAct's new Mobile Monitor fits that bill nicely. The backlit, high resolution LCD display, complete with brightness, contrast, tint, and volume controls, allows consumers to play games outside the living room. Furthermore, the Mobile Monitor includes two stereo speakers as well as a headphone jack. The Mobile Monitor is packaged with an AC adaptor for the monitor and a two pronged car adapter that powers the PS One and the Mobile Monitor. As an added plus, the Monitor also includes a second A/V-In port that allows gamers to view a VCR/DVD player or even other game systems on the Mobile Monitor's screen.

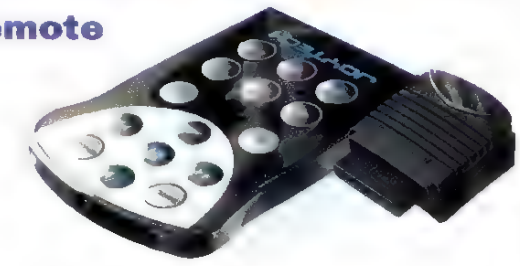
PowerStation 600

Manufacturer: Monster Cable
Contact: 415.840.2000 • www.monstercable.com
System(s): Multiple • **MSRP:** $24.95
Availability: Now

The PowerStation 600 makes power hookup safe and easy with its six color-coded outlets and multiple SurgeGaurd circuitry, which is designed to limit peak voltage and prevent AC power surges from damaging equipment. Other special features include 24K gold contact for maximum power transfer, two wide spaced adapter outlets for bulky accessories, built-in safety tabs to protect children from unused outlets and modem and Ethernet protection for online gaming. Highly recommended for consumers interested in organizing power cords and protecting their gaming investment.

DVD Wireless Remote

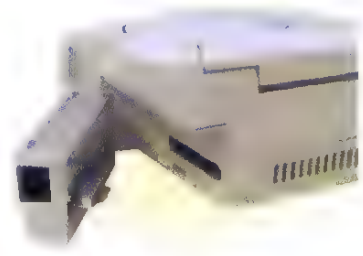
Manufacturer: Joytech
Contact: 888.522.5467
www.joytechusa.com
System(s): PlayStation 2
MSRP: N/A
Availability: Now



The introduction of the PlayStation 2 and its DVD movie-playing capability has allowed third-party peripheral manufacturers to introduce a product that would otherwise be off limits to them: DVD remote controls. It seems like just about everyone is offering a PS2 remote in every imaginable shape, size and color. Joytech is the newest company to try its hand in the remote market, but its wireless remote looks to leapfrog the competition by offering something different. Unlike some of its competitor's bulky and awkwardly shaped offerings, Joytech's remote is much smaller in design, plus it offers a simple button layout that's intuitive and easy to use.

DC Broadband Adapter

Manufacturer: Sega of America
Contact: 415.701.6000 • www.sega.com
System(s): Dreamcast • **MSRP:** $59.99
Availability: January 2001



The Dreamcast Broadband Adapter, which allows users to hook the Dreamcast up to a LAN, DSL, or cable modem connection, is making its way to U.S. retail stores soon and online game players couldn't be happier. So what's all the fuss about? In a nutshell, far less lag and superior game play await users of this little peripheral. It will play-depending on the server and your line speed-almost as well as your games do when playing in single-player mode. At the moment, only *Quake III: Arena* supports the broadband adapter, but future titles such as *Half-Life* and *Unreal Tournament* will allow its use as well. It should be noted that while we tested an import adapter, the American version will be identical to its Japanese counterpart.

Xploder CD9000

Manufacturer: Fire International
Contact: 847.593.5740 • www.blaze-gear.com
System(s): PlayStation, PlayStation 2
MSRP: N/A • **Availability:** Now

Blaze is bringing one of Europe's best selling cheat devices to the states. The Xploder CD9000 cheat CD has over 2,000 pre-loaded cheats ready for use and works with all existing PlayStation game consoles. Gamers who prefer to cheat their way to victory can use many of the helpful shortcuts found on this disc including infinite health, unlimited ammo, secret characters, extra weapons and invincibility. An Xploder codes hotline (900.737.7000) and dedicated Xploder website (www.xploder.net) are available for consumers to access new cheats as they are made available.

GameLink 300

Manufacturer: Monster Cable
Contact: 415.840.2000 • www.monstercable.com
System(s): PlayStation 2 • **MSRP:** $39.95
Availability: Now

Monster Cable's entry into the home console business is great news for gamers and retailers alike. Monster's reputation for producing high-quality audio and video cables is unmatched anywhere in the world and that same commitment to excellence should carry over to its new line of premium gaming accessories for PS2. First up is the GameLink 300, a high performance S-Video AV hookup of PS2 to TV or receiver. This 10 foot long cable features 24K Gold contact and 8-cut Turbine RCA connectors to deliver reference quality sound and the clearest, sharpest picture possible for games and DVD movie titles.

GameWEEK Accessory Market *is an overview of game peripherals for the home videogame and PC market.* Accessory Market *is meant to provide current information regarding the product and its potential at the time of its release. It also represents the status of the product's current marketability.* Accessory Market *is by no means final judgment on a product and should not be solely used by retailers to base buying decisions on.*

GameWEEK

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT • DECEMBER 11, 2000

HOLIDAY RETAIL GAMES GUIDE

By the time you read these words, the holiday shopping season will be at cruising altitude. And if the season comes out the way we'd all like it to, the familiar sound of jingle bells will be drowned out only by the ringing of cash registers.

Just when we thought things couldn't get any crazier, they have. There are now no less than a half dozen platform choices for consumers to mull over and hundreds of titles to confuse the senses. In order to help make sense of it all, *GameWEEK* has assembled a "Holiday Top 5" roundup of software titles we think have the greatest sales potential for each of the six main platforms. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the sleigh ride!

GameWEEK's Holiday Top 5

SONY PLAYSTATION 2

$299.95 MSRP

By Bryan Intihar

Sales Pitch:

"I would sell you a PS2 if I had one, but you can put your name on the waiting list and hopefully we'll get you a PS2 by the spring."

Horizontal stand sold separately

Unless you've been sleeping in a cave for the last few months, you already know by now that the PlayStation 2 is *the* hot item this holiday season. The 128 bit, next-generation system features two controller ports, two memory card slots and more importantly, a DVD-ROM drive. This means along with playing some of the best-looking videogames ever made, consumers can watch their favorite movies on the PS2. The PS2 can also play PS One games. The North American unit also has an expansion bay located at its backside for a hard-drive/modem, both of which are expected to become available sometime in 2001. Consumers should not be reluctant to pick up a PS2 as it is expected to have a long shelf life. The console will continue to be at the top of the console market along with Xbox and GameCube (both are being released in 2001.)

1. Madden NFL 2001

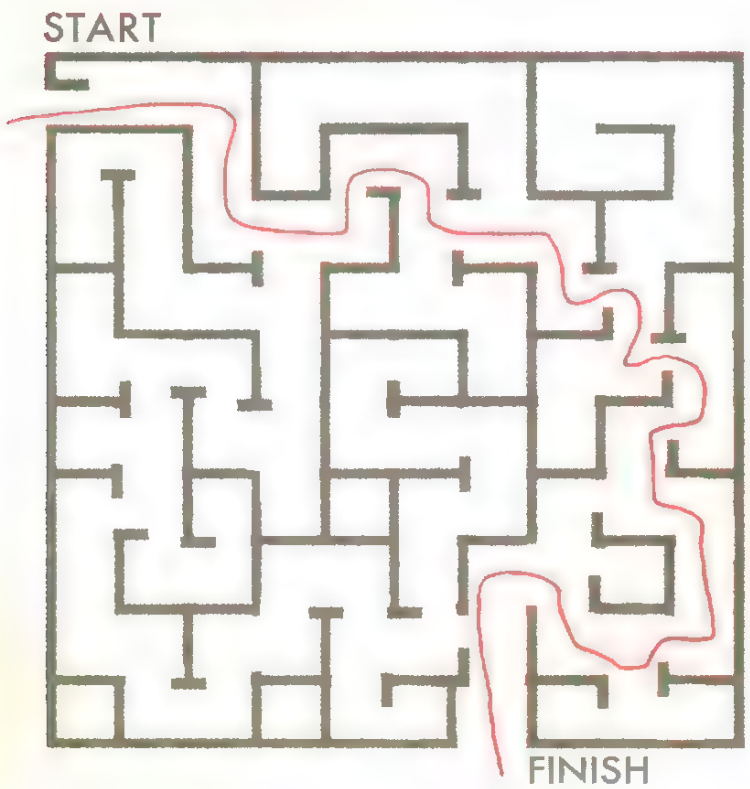
Electronic Arts • $49.95 MSRP

Week after week this continues to be the best selling PS2 title and for good reason. EA Sports includes all

the extras found in past Madden games and this time it sports the best visuals ever for a football game. No other title in this category can compete with the *Madden NFL 2001* package. A must-have for any PS2 owner

Continued on page 3

Direct-to-store distribution: We know the way.



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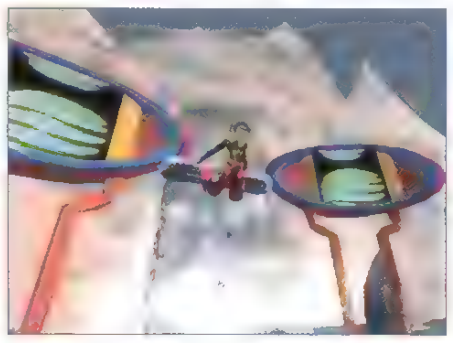
SONY PLAYSTATION 2

2. Tekken Tag Tournament
Namco • $49.95 MSRP

Namco's world famous fighting series still reigns supreme with its latest installment for the PS2. *Tekken Tag* includes a multitude of fighters from the previous games as well as the new Tag mode. While it may get some pressure from Tecmo's *DOA 2: Hardcore*, the sales numbers demonstrate that Tekken still garners more consumer dollars.



3. SSX
Electronic Arts • $49.95 MSRP

This is probably the surprise title for the console. *SSX* has received tons of kudos from consumer publications and industry insiders, and even thought by many to be the best PS2 launch title. Unbelievable track designs, tons of game bonuses, precise controls and stunning graphics even make the non-extreme sports fan give *SSX* a chance.

4. Smuggler's Run
Rockstar Games • $49.95 MSRP

With the PS2 launch being full of sequels, Rockstar Games gives consumers something new in the form of *Smuggler's Run*. Players control a wide range of vehicles where they travel over expansive environments trying to deliver contraband and avoid the law. Each mission is set over beautiful terrains that help demonstrate what the PS2 can do.

5. NHL 2001
Electronic Arts • $49.95 MSRP

Once again EA Sports shows its early domination of the PS2 software market with the addition of *NHL 2001*. This popular hockey franchise continues to improve as it moves to the new platform with true-to-life player models, bone-crushing hits and fast-paced gameplay. The strong fan base and lack of competition make *NHL 2001* one game to continuously stock this holiday.

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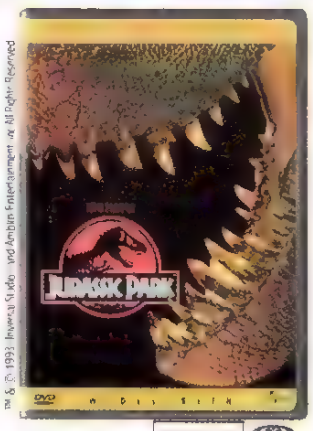

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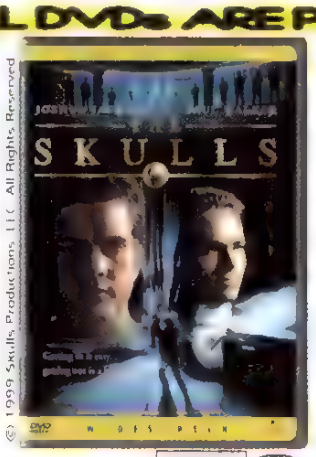

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After Decent Nine Months, Retailers Look to Holidays

Dreamcast, Game Boy, N64, PC & accessories will help fill PS2 shortage

By Steve Traiman

After upbeat unit sales but flat dollars for the first nine months of console and computer game and accessory sales compared to last year, retailers are looking to the big holiday season to cap what is shaping up as another record year.

While Sony's PlayStation 2 (PS2) had a monster launch October 26, the allocation of only 500,000 of an expected million consoles to all retail accounts due to a critical chip shortage is seen as a key factor for a broader holiday season. Sony has promised weekly shipments up to Christmas-and three million through next March, but most retailers see some good product from Dreamcast, N64 and Game Boy/Color filling the gap nicely. The initial PS2 sales at $299 each will add $150 million to the year-end hardware total.

According to NPD TRSTS figures, overall videogame hardware, software and accessory sales at retail were up 14% in units in dollars and only 1% in dollars, vs. the same January-September period in 1999, NPD analyst Kristin Barnett reports. PC/Mac entertainment software was up 12% in units and 8% in dollars, but edutainment titles dipped 19% in units and 23% in dollars.

On the videogame side, portable software, mostly Game Boy/Color, was up 22% in units and 18% in dollars, while next generation software—PSX, N64 and Dreamcast—was ahead 30% in units and 17% in dollars.

Here's a sampling of comments from representatives of brick-and-mortar, click-and-mortar and online game retailers, including Babbage's Etc., Electronic Boutique/Ebworld.com, Ditan Distribution, ShopKo Stores, the Musicland Group, Blockbuster Entertainment and Wal-Mart.

The Babbage's Etc. chain will have almost 1,000 outlets open for the holidays, notes president and CEO Dan DeMatteo. "Overall, the first nine months has been good on the games side," he says. "Dreamcast filled a hole for us in spring and summer, as we were disappointed by N64 *Pokémon* sales and the decline in PlayStation price points. It's a difficult year to predict but our prognosis is that original PlayStation sales are holding up, we've seen a resurgence in Color Game Boy since *Pokémon Gold and Silver* came out, and now *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask* has spiked N64. We're encouraged by the SegaNet online game launch and the Dreamcast console price drop and believe this will help fill the gap until PS2 shipments catch up with our 200,000 preorders, which may not be until after the holidays." He notes that GBC sales are inordinately high over the holidays and is very bullish on this niche category that he calls "grandma bait." On the PC side, he doesn't see any really big holiday titles, and notes that the computer game market usually suffers from a new platform introduction due to the early adopter crossover.

> ***"Clearly consumers have shown that they like the choice of being able to rent a game before buying... from the stores' perspective, games are contributing steadily to the growth of our video division..."***
>
> *Steve Lundeen, vice president, interactive merchandising, Blockbuster Entertainment*

Both Electronics Boutique and its Ebworld.com online store share similar, guardedly optimistic forecasts for the holidays. Jeff Griffiths, senior vice president, merchandising and distribution for the stores, observes that, "Like the TRSTS figures, our first nine months unit sales were up but dollars were flat." He notes that PSX was a little better than expected, Dreamcast and N64 had good first half sales, Game Boy got busy with *Gold and Silver*, and PC business was pretty good up through early fall. Noting that the online store launched in July 1997, president Seth Levy reports "business the first nine months up dramatically in all categories. With a major revamp for the last holiday quarter, we've seen continuing benefits with traffic doubled so far this year." About 100,000 PS2 preorders were noted for both the traditional and online stores, with about 90% in the brick and mortar outlets, with that total allocation gone by the weekend. For the holidays, Levy notes that the Web store follows the chain stores, but shares with Griffiths the upside potential of PS2 as a hardware contributor to overall sales. The latter also sees Dreamcast fulfilling the typical second year platform sales increase.

Nintendo's releases of* The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask *and* Pokémon Gold and Silver *has helped spike sales for their respective systems.

He was disappointed not only with the drastic PS2 allocation, but also with the lack of Sony's own accessories, although innovative third-party products filled this gap.

For Ditan Distribution in Eatontown, NJ, the first three quarters "were about even with last year," says president Ron Novotny. The company handles distribution for Babbage's Etc. and about 14,000 other retail outlets, for Sega and a dozen other publishers including Activision, Eidos, Infogrames and Interplay. He observes that GBC was the strongest platform, PSX was still strong, N64 sales were down, Dreamcast was a bit better and PC about even with last year. For the holidays, he observes that, "We had plenty of allocation for our publishers' initial PS2 titles, and with reports of a positive SegaNet launch, the PS2 shortage will help Dreamcast demand. It's just a great market for Game Boy Color all the way."

"Clearly consumers have shown that they like the choice of being able to rent a game before buying," says Steve Lundeen, vice president, interactive merchandising, for Blockbuster Entertainment, the largest games "rentailer." All 3,800 U.S. stores have GBC hardware and a variety of titles available for rental for families traveling this holiday season, about 500 have had Dreamcast con

Continued on page 28

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GameWEEK's Holiday Top 5 — SONY PS ONE

$99.95 MSRP

By Bryan Intihar

flip top display/sound panel not included

Sales Pitch:

"Cheer up, little Billy/Mary/whoever is whining.... I know you wanted the PS2 this Christmas, but I got something that should put a smile on your face. It's called the PS One and it has a ton of great games with many of them being really cheap. I bet you could even get some without the help of Mommy and Daddy from saving your lunch money."

PlayStation 2 may be getting all the hype, the PS One is still a superb gift idea. For only $99, consumers get a console that currently has the largest software library covering every genre from sports to fighting to action/adventure and role-playing. Another added bonus of the PS2 release is that the price of the PS One software has decreased as most titles range from $30-40. There is even an impressive "Greatest Hits" lineup that retails for only $20. Some consumers may be worried that with the PS2 now on the market, the PS One library would dissipate. However, publishers and developers recognize that North America has a large PS One installed base and consequently have announced more projects for 2001. With the short PS2 supply, the PS One remains a strong selling holiday item.

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Activision • $39.95 MSRP

It's hard to imagine that a skateboarding game could outsell the likes of a *Madden* or a *Final Fantasy*, but that is exactly what

Activision has done. The sequel released this fall is dominating the PS sales charts and there are no indications that it will slow down. Simply put: the best gets even better.

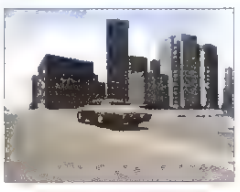
2. Final Fantasy IX
Squaresoft • $39.95 MSRP

This marks the last in the series for the PS One as it goes to the more powerful PS2 next year. Square has gone back to the roots of the

series to create a more medieval setting. That being said, *Final Fantasy IX* has the potential to be best yet. Retailers should stock up on numerous copies as well as the strategy guide by Brady Games.

3. Driver 2
Infogrames • $44.95 MSRP

Infogrames' chaotic mission-based driving series returns in time for the holiday. The sequel delivers even more action than the



original with on-foot gameplay, more vehicles and driving locations all over the world. *Driver 2* has disappointed some in the media, but it will still sell because of the overwhelming success of the original.

4. WWF Smackdown 2!: Know Your Role THQ • $39.95 MSRP

The early part of 2000 for PS One software was dominated by THQ's *Smackdown!*, and the company hopes history repeats itself this

winter. Developer Yukes has added new features to the sequel like ladder and table matches, and an improved Create-A-Wrestler Mode. As wrestling's popularity grows, the sales of its related products continue to bring in more revenue.

5. Madden NFL 2001
Electronic Arts • $39.95 MSRP

What would the holidays be without another *Madden*? Even though it doesn't have the

graphical presentation of its PS2 counterpart, its in-game options cannot be matched by any other PS One football title. When it comes to finding a gift for that manly gamer, you can never go wrong with a little *Madden*.

GameWEEK's Holiday Top 5 — SEGA DREAMCAST

$149.95 MSRP

By Jim Loftus

Special black "Sega Sports Collector's Edition" Dreamcast pictured, $169.95 MSRP

Sales Pitch:

"Psst...hey, buddy. I know you might've heard people talking about how the Dreamcast is dead, or how there aren't very many good games available for it–well forget it, nothing could be further from the truth! There's a heap of awesome Dreamcast games out right now; stuff like Crazy Taxi, Sonic Adventure, Tony Hawk, Shenmue*–the list goes on and on. Plus, you can go online with games like* NBA *and* NFL 2K1, Quake III, *and soon,* Phantasy Star Online. *Oh, and the system's only a hundred and fifty bucks, with a modem built-in!!*

With Dreamcast, Sega seems to be doing a lot of things right. It's also doing a few things very wrong, if the general response from Joe Public is anything to go by. At a time when the company seems to be firing on nearly every cylinder under the hood; powerful hardware, killer software, and a history making dive into online console gaming, it is misfiring in a big way when it comes to spreading the DC gospel. Whether it's a lack of funding or merely a lack of good judgment, there seems to be an awful lot of people who just don't know what the hell a Dreamcast is. That's a shame because this little white box is capable of some amazing things. Many in the industry (myself included) have seen jaws hit the carpet when people get their first look at *Shenmue*. We've paid witness to grown men dancing like fools under the hypnotic spell of *Samba de Amigo*. And we've seen people fall out of their chairs during crazed competition in *NFL 2K1*. No one can truly predict what state the Dreamcast will be in this time next year, but as of today, one thing is certain: at a mere $150, the Dreamcast is worth every penny based on the content offered and should not fail to impress those game players who decide to purchase it, hardcore or otherwise.

1. Sega Sports' NFL 2K1
Sega • $49.95 MSRP

With its slick visuals and improved gameplay, Sega's latest pigskin title will likely be the most sought after Dreamcast game this holiday. To make itself even more attractive, *NFL 2K1* offers real, honest to goodness online play against others from around the country. If you're dealing with customers who've typically shied away from playing network games in the past due to the complex nature of PCs, it's vital that you explain to them just how easy it is to get online with a Dreamcast. Lord knows Sega's not doing it.

2. Shenmue • Sega • $49.95 MSRP

The most expensive videogame ever produced isn't your typical game, but that hasn't stopped it from receiving widespread

Continued on page 10

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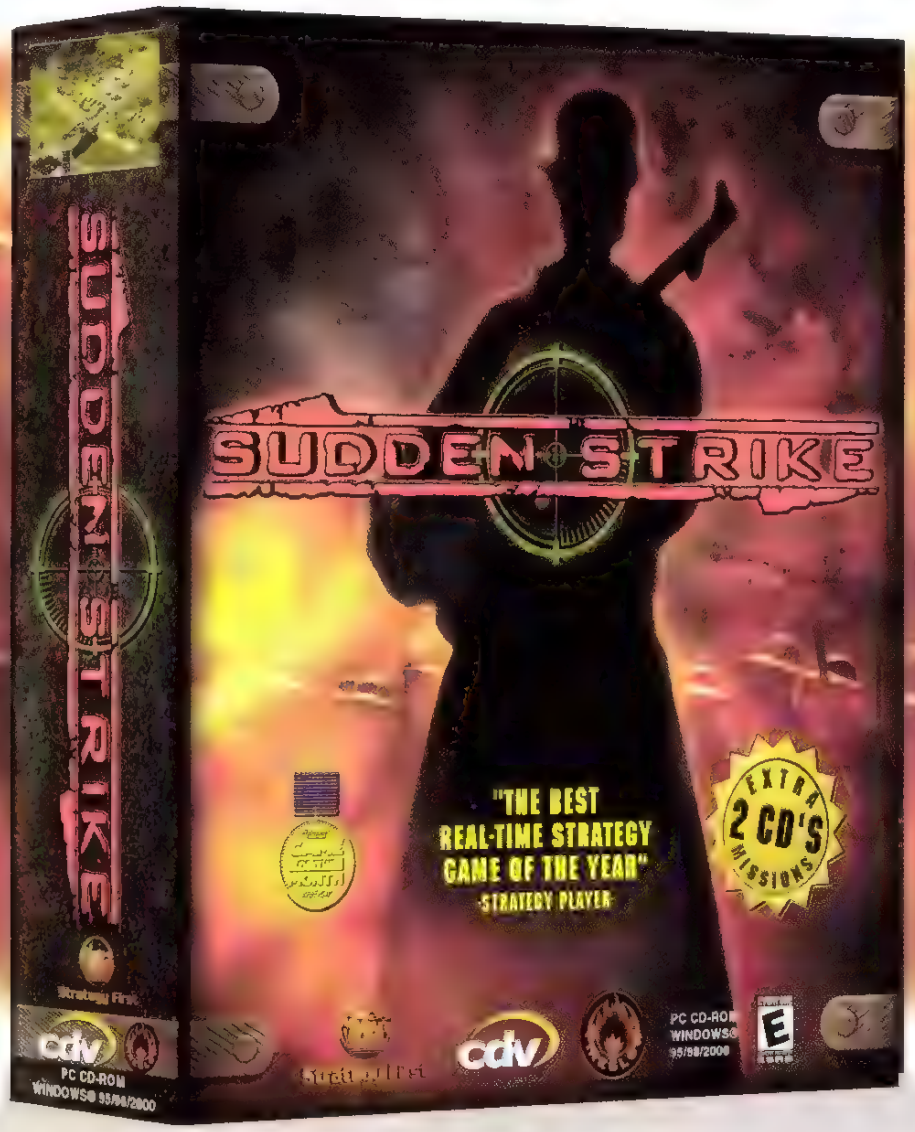
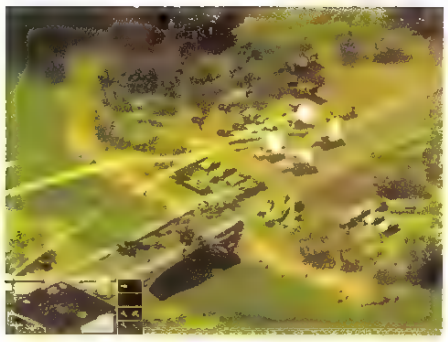
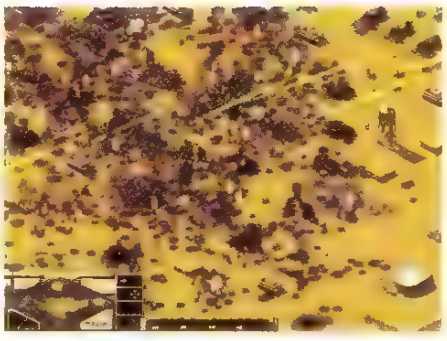
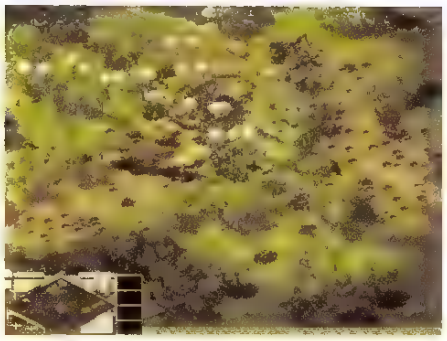


"...ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WWII WARGAMES TO DATE. THE GAME LOOKS BRILLIANT"

- IGN.COM -







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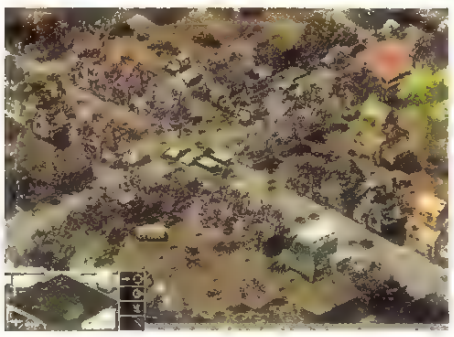

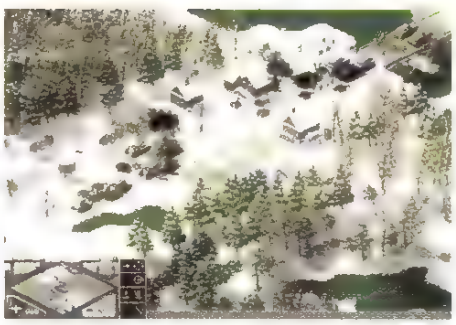

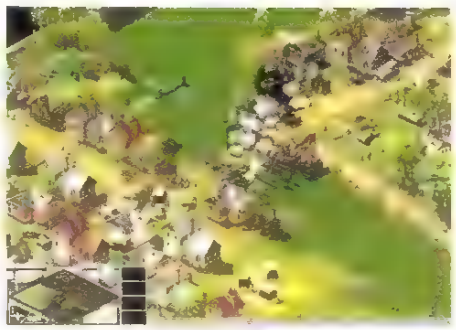

Join the Page 6

SEGA DREAMCAST

critical acclaim and a fast start at retail. *Shenmue* links together multiple genres —exploring, fighting, racing, and a few miscellaneous sub games thrown in –and the result is a full-flavored, albeit slow paced, experience. The hype surrounding *Shenmue* (many regard it as "better looking than any PS2 game") should draw consumers in for a closer look. Action seekers may be let down, but for those looking for a new reality-based gaming experience (set in Japan in the mid 80s... go figure), this could be the escape they're looking for.

3. Sonic Adventure
Sega • $19.95 MSRP

The blue hedgehog has had no trouble hanging out in the Dreamcast top ten, pulling in consistent sales revenue since its release at the system's launch. *Sonic Adventure* showcases what Sega's machine is capable of when put into the right hands; in this case, the hands of Yuji Naka and Sonic Team. There's a reason this action based 3D game keeps selling. It's called "fun." When it comes to graphics and gameplay, *Sonic Adventure* takes the best of both worlds and crams them into a solid, enjoyable 3D action game that should keep players immersed for weeks on end. The value-priced sticker should also make it an impulse buy for many new Dreamcast consumers.

4. Sega Sports' NBA 2K1
Sega • $49.95 MSRP

This year's game brings with it new moves, up to-date NBA player data, and new outdoor venues ripe for trash talk. Most notably though, like *NFL 2K1*, Sega's second-generation Dreamcast b-ball title is geared up and ready to offer network gaming to players all over the country. With American sports fanatics smack dab in the middle of the 2000 basketball season, we expect *NBA 2K1* to maintain strong sales through the busy shopping season and make it into the top five once the smoke clears.

5. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Activision • $44.95 MSRP

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 ups the ante by offering players new tricks, new skate parks, new pro skaters, and an innovative new Create-a-Park option that lets players custom build their own courses, then jump in for the action. For this DC version, the polygon models and environments have been redesigned, giving everything a more refined, polished look. Even with several other similar options sitting on the shelf, such as *Jet Grind Radio* and the original *Tony Hawk*, for instance, *Pro Skater 2* will very likely be one of the top selling Dreamcast games during the holidays.

GameWEEK Holiday Top 5 NINTENDO 64
$99.95 MSRP

By Ben Rinaldi

Special Edition Pikachu Nintendo 64 pictured. $49.95 MSRP

Sales Pitch:

"The N64's low price and terrific library of games (particularly on the multi-player side) make it the perfect starter system for newbies."

Alas, the end is near for Nintendo's 64-bit "Fun Machine." The Nintendo 64 is a dinosaur compared to today's sleek new systems like Dreamcast and PlayStation 2, however the last of the cart-based home consoles has endured and continues to sell at a steady pace (surprisingly, it is out-selling Dreamcast year-to-date according to NPD TRSTS sales data). Nintendo continues to do everything in its power to keep the N64 on life-support until its new baby, GameCube, is delivered in fall 2001. This year alone, Nintendo has enticed buyers with special *Donkey Kong 64* and *Pokémon Stadium* hardware bundles and a new line of colorful N64 systems called "Funtastic." Hoping to cash in (again) on the popularity of Pokémon, Nintendo has saved perhaps its best trick for last, introducing a newly redesigned N64 adorned with a large, colorful Pikachu image. Not too many kiddies will be able to resist this cute n' cuddly package.

Things have dried up immeasurably on the software side as third party support has all but vanished. Next year looks to be a bleak one for N64 owners however, there are still a few notable gems to choose from this holiday shopping season.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Nintendo • $59.95 MSRP

Barring any unforeseen surprises, *Majora's Mask* will most likely be the last great N64 game. Gamers will have a hard time resisting the charms of Nintendo's latest RPG masterpiece as it takes them on an epic journey to save the world from an impending

Continued on page 14

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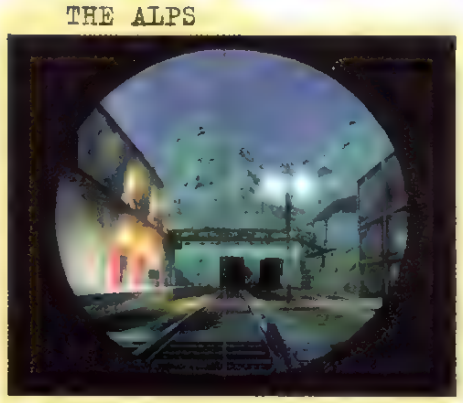

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NINTENDO 64

catastrophe. Following the exploits of our hero Link, *Majora's Mask* takes place in a dark parallel universe where reality and illusion mingle. As the game's name suggests, masks play a major role in Link's adventure as different masks give him different abilities.

2. WWF No Mercy
THQ • $59.95 MSRP

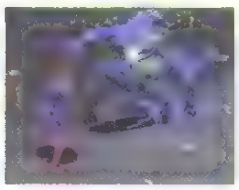
The massive appeal of WWF professional wrestling is mind-boggling and nowhere is that more evident than in the videogame arena where wrestling-based titles have become an overnight sensation. THQ has been smart (some might even say lucky) to capitalize on wrestlingís mass-market appeal by releasing one hit game after another over the years. *No Mercy* is N64's latest brawler featuring more than 60 wrestlers and 10 arenas to fight in. THQ has done another fine job of delivering a top-notch wrestling title that excels in the two categories that matter most: play control and fun factor.

3. The World Is Not Enough
Electronic Arts • $59.95 MSRP

James Bond returns to N64 in grand fashion, thanks to the combined efforts of publisher Electronic Arts and developer Eurocom. *The World Is Not Enough* follows the movie of the same name very closely, pitting Bond in an international conspiracy involving terrorists and bombs. As far as first-person shooters go, there's not much this game does wrong. Fans of *GoldenEye* will be thrilled with the lush graphics, tried-and-true play mechanics, and high-tech weapons that this title serves up. *GoldenEye* loyalists would be wise to pick this one up.

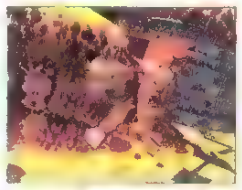
4. Spider-Man
Activision • $59.95 MSRP

The Daily Bugle is reporting that Spider Man's newest adventure on the N64 has the potential to be the sleeper hit of the year, and who are we to argue with the opinions of J. Jonah Jameson's newspaper? Using the popular line of comic books as a launching point, players take control of Spidey who finds himself embroiled in the timeless struggle of good versus evil as he faces off against a challenging collection of demented foes. Among them, Venom, Rhino and Scorpion—all dedicated to make life a living hell for our beloved web-head. This game allows you to do whatever a spider can. In addition to crawling up walls and swinging from the tops of skyscrapers, Spidey can wrap up enemies with his webbing and throw them against walls, fire solid web balls as projectile attacks, and create spiked gloves to wrap around his fists.



5. Banjo-Tooie
Rare/Nintendo • $59.95 MSRP

Rare squeezes more juice out of the N64 hardware than any developer in the world, including Nintendo. *Banjo-Tooie* taps into the N64's graphics processing abilities to produce some of the most incredibly vibrant, detailed environments ever to grace the console. Although the core gameplay remains the same—players must collect Jiggies to open new areas, collect honeycombs to increase their health, and solve puzzles as they make their way through the game—a host of new features and abilities have been added including the option to take control of multiple characters.



GAME BOY COLOR

$69.95 MSRP

By Jim Loftus

Sales Pitch:

"Honestly, I can think of no better way to have fun on the road than by playing this little sucker. I've pulled mine out at least a half dozen times at airports just this year alone! At only seventy bucks for the unit—the games are in full color, by the way—and with a ton of great, value-priced software available year-round, you just cannot go wrong."

Nintendo has truly been able to do what no other company has so far: keep a handheld gaming device and the software that runs on it at or near the top of the sales charts for more than a decade. Fueled by an attractive selection of inexpensive software (can you say *Tetris*?), the original monochromatic Game Boy took the world by storm back in 1989. Since that time, Nintendo has hardly had time to look back and instead, focused on improving an already stellar idea. Take Game Boy Color, for instance. The unit is lightweight, battery efficient, and entertaining as can be when it comes to gaming on the go. There are literally hundreds of titles for consumers to choose from and, while those titles may not all be A-caliber, many of them are arguably some of the best playing pieces of software ever produced for a handheld. With the metamorphosis continuing in the form of Game Boy Advance next year (set to ship in the U.S. in July), the 2000 holiday season may very well end up as the last great year for Game Boy Color revenue (at least the current iteration.) From *Driver* to *Donald Duck*, from *Metal Gear Solid* to *Mary-Kate and Ashley*, there are more Game Boy Color titles than ever before lining the shelves. Of course, if you've been involved with the game industry for any length of time, it should come as no surprise that amid the 100+ new Game Boy Color releases this year alone, Nintendo once again dominates the charts with Pikachu and friends.

1. Pokémon Gold/Silver
Nintendo • $29.95 MSRP

Wildly hyped as one of the deepest and most detail-oriented Game Boy Color titles of all time, *Pokémon Gold* and *Pokémon Silver* are currently setting the world on fire. But hey, you didn't need us to tell you that, right? I'm sure the cash register is ringing away, even as you read these words. Containing an incredibly rich game world, a real-time internal clock (play at night and it's nighttime in the game, too), and a Pokémon breeding function, among other things, the *Gold* and *Silver* series delivers extremely long play value. Number one with a bullet.

2. Pokémon Pinball
Nintendo • $34.95 MSRP

Take the Pokémon franchise, add two pinball machines and the ability to catch all 150 types

...om the Page 11

NINTENDO GAME BOY COLOR

of them there critters, and what do you have? A best-seller. In addition to offering addictive gameplay, *Pokémon Pinball* also provides printer support, link compatibility, and a very clever rumble feature, built right in. *Pokémon Pinball* has been at or near the top of the sales charts for months now, and we don't expect things to change before the end of the holidays.

3. Pokémon Special Pikachu Edition (a.k.a. Pokémon Yellow) Nintendo • $29.95 MSRP

Truth is, this special edition is nothing more than *Pokémon Red/Blue* reworked with a few alterations, such as color tinting and different Pokémon placement. For those fans who have

not had the fortune of experiencing Pokémon through either games from the *Red* and *Blue* series, though, this is an absolute must-buy.

4. Donkey Kong Country Nintendo • $29.95 MSRP

With but a few exceptions—namely a limited color palette, a loss of graphic detail, and some collision issues—this is an incredibly faithful port of the 16-bit Super NES classic. Rare has done a magnificent job squeezing every level and bonus round into the Game Boy Color, while keeping the overall gameplay intact. As if all this weren't good enough, two exclusive mini-games—fishing and "whack-a mole" style events—have also been added. This is sure to please action enthusiasts.

5. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision • $29.95 MSRP

Okay, so it's not composed of texture-mapped polygons and it's not exactly running in 3D, but considering the hardware we're dealing with here, this is pretty solid. Forget the first GBC *Tony Hawk*; the sequel is a huge improvement thanks to a nice mix of side-scrolling, overhead and "simulated" 3D levels. Throw in a ton of trick combinations, secret levels, and two modes of play and you've got a great little package, just begging to be taken on the road.

GameWEEK's Holiday Top 5 PC GAMES

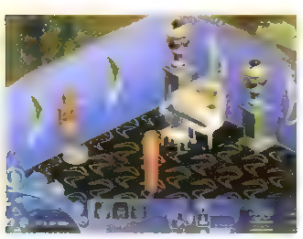
By Andy Eddy

Sales Pitch:

"For the cost of a PS2 on eBay, you can get yourself a decently powered PC... and best of all I have them in stock!"

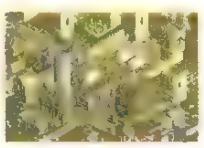
Game consoles may come and go, but the personal computer seems to be a perennial that maintains popularity over its existence. With a relatively low cost, easy networking connectivity, powerful processor and modular upgradability, a lot of gamers are sticking with the reliable PC as a must have gaming platform-even if they own a console.

1. The Sims: Livin' Large Electronic Arts • $29.95 MSRP



We've got a trend alert: Sequels and expansion packs. If you're worried about what to stock, you'd be hard pressed this holiday season to pass up the wealth of solid sequels and expansion packs-which, not surprisingly, hit every slot on this list. Indeed, the recent expansion pack to *The Sims* title is sustaining the goofy popularity of the gibberish-speaking family simulator with the computer-gaming public. Similar to an ant farm, which on the surface doesn't seem like it would offer much entertainment value, *The Sims* franchise strikes a nerve with a blend of strategy, humor and real-life behavior.

2. RollerCoaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes Hasbro Interactive • $29.95 MSRP

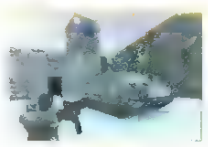


Who doesn't like the thrills and excitement of a roller coaster? Even those who can't bring themselves to hop aboard the fast-moving rides can still enjoy watching the screaming passengers as they go up and down hills, through loops and otherwise body-twisting turns. That explains the basic appeal of the *RollerCoaster Tycoon* series, which is boosted by this recently released expansion. One step up from riding or watching a coaster-and something generally unattainable in the "real world"-is actually constructing your own hair-raising ride, then putting a group of byte-sized patrons through it to see how well it came out.

3. Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2 Electronic Arts • $39.95 MSRP

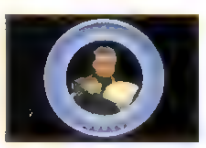
In the five years since *Command & Conquer* was first released, the real-time strategy genre has taken leaps and bounds. Still, the latest entry, *Red Alert 2*, carries along many familiar features from its predecessors, but avoids falling into a rut by adding and improving-sometimes in subtle ways. For instance, the interface is streamlined, the process of constructing units has been given added flexibility, unit control has been improved and more. Much of the press coverage has noted various "tweaks" and "variations," which means that *C&C* veterans will be comfortable, yet the overall playability has been improved to draw new players into the series.

4. Half-Life: Counter Strike Sierra Studios • $29.95 MSRP



On the surface, the original *Half-Life* looked like just another first-person shooter (FPS), but anyone who played it for more than a few minutes saw that it was much deeper, with a vivid storyline set in science fiction to go along with the thrilling action and compelling gameplay that most FPS titles have. Enter this new chapter, which builds upon *Half-Life*'s multiplayer aspects with a team-based terrorist vs. anti-terrorist premise, new weapons and the need to determine viable strategies. It also provides other "mods," the modifications to the base game that drives a game's replay value.

5. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire 2nd Edition Buena Vista Interactive • $19.95 MSRP



This almost goes without the need for explanation, but *Millionaire 2* certainly doesn't defy reason in following its predecessor to big sales: a trivia game that's at the same time simplistic in design and challenging in substance. Couple that with a nearly all ages appeal and a good price, and you've got a formula for suceess.

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US

MICHAEL
CLARKE DUNCAN

MacPlay Continues Momentum

Company releases three more titles

Late last month, MacPlay announced three more premium titles for the Mac to be published in 2001. As part of the original MacPlay licensing deal also announced in November, MacPlay has secured from Interplay the rights to pub lish *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*, *Sacrifice*, and *Starfleet Command Volume II: Empires at War* for the Macintosh.

"This is only the beginning," said MacPlay CEO Ron Dimant. "We're very pleased to announce the first part of our 2001 lineup. These games will look and sound great on Apple hardware, and truly original titles like *Giants* and *Sacrifice* should be in high demand among those who 'Think Different.'"

Giants: Citizen Kabuto is a single and multiplayer game in real-time 3D. In their quest for control of 30 separate islands, players choose from three distinct and diverse races. Sea Reapers are queens of the waters, and can command elemental forces. Meccaryns are an alien military force with technological prowess. Kabuto is the fearsome giant, who can kick around Meccaryns and Sea Reapers like soccer balls, or eat them for snacks.

***Left to right:* Starfleet Command Vol. II, Sacrifice *and* Giants: Citizen Kabuto**

Sacrifice is a real-time strategy game in which players become powerful wizards who must appease one of five gods. Players command an army of 55 unique creatures in this real-time 3D magical world, and with spells and wizardry, can rain fire upon combatants, or cause earthquakes to alter the battlefield.

Starfleet Command Volume II: Empires at War is the latest space battle simulator set in the Star Trek game universe. Players can command the ships of any of a number of races: Starfleet, Klingon, the Mirak Star League, and others. Several modes of play allow players to forge a career as a starship captain, or simply set up quick battles against computer or human opponents.

"Macintosh gamers will have a lot to look forward to in 2001," stated PR Director Jason Whong. "With these great titles, as well as *Baldur's Gate II* and *Icewind Dale*, MacPlay will provide some of 2001's best games for the Macintosh. HRG

Choosing New Mac Games with Longer Shelf Lives

Many games are released with the potential to sell well in a short period of time, but often lose their popularity quickly after the first several weeks after release. While there are numerous publishers releasing Mac titles these days, only MacSoft and Aspyr Media seem to be pumping out titles that have massive appeal to all audiences (and thus have a greater potential to sell well over a longer period of time). Since so many new Mac games have released over the past few months, here are some recommendations on games that should provide consistent sales in the long-term. MacSoft has shifted their focus from hard-core games to titles that are more appealing to a general audience. Not only will this shift help MacSoft sell more titles, but it will help keep more of their games on store shelves longer. Recently released MacSoft titles expected to provide consistent sales include *LinksLS 2000*, *Scrabble* (2000 release), *Jeopardy* (2000 release), *Risk II*, *Wheel of Fortune*, *Mac Tonka Truck Pack*, and *Mac Kids Pack*. All (except *LinksLS 2000*) carry a below-$30 price tag.

The Sims *and* LinksLS 2000

MacSoft's *Mac Fun Pack 2* contains four "classic" MacSoft titles repackaged into one box: *Lode Runner 2*, *Play Two Win Casino*, *Real Pool* and *America's Greatest Solitaire Games*. All four games offer good family game variety, and will run on Mac systems that are 6-7 years old (as well as today's currently shipping Mac systems). It is recommended that you have at least a Power Mac system, although one game only requires a 68030 processor.

Aspyr Media caters to the hard-core gamer in a big way. *Madden NFL 2000*, *Need for Speed: Porsche*, and *Star Trek: Elite Force* are all likely to sell quite well in the short term, but you might want to keep an eye on a few other Aspyr titles that will likely out-last the high-end hard core games. *The Sims*, *The Sims: Livin' Large Expansion Pack*, and *Sim Theme Park* are all likely to remain in demand for quite some time. Next year, Aspyr will release *Escape from Monkey Island*, another game expected to sell well for an extended period of time. HRG

3dfx Releases Mac Voodoo 4 4500 PCI Graphics

Earlier this fall, 3dfx released their high powered Voodoo 5 card for Mac. Recently, Mac users enjoyed availability of the Voodoo4 4500 PCI graphics board, featuring fully integrated and accelerated 2D/3D rendering capability. Voodoo4 4500 PCI, though less powerful (and cheaper) than the gamer-friendly Voodoo 5, offers a design and publishing solution that delivers high quality image quality. Utilizing a 350 MHz RAMDAC for optimum 2D imaging, the Voodoo4 4500 PCI delivers resolutions as high as 2048 x 1536 (at thousands of colors setting). In addition, Voodoo4 4500 PCI can go beyond analog CRTs to deliver a clean, edge-to-edge creative workspace on all-digital flat panels. Enhanced 2D acceleration yields impressive responsiveness and is further tuned with integrated font and picture caching. So whether users are running Adobe Photoshop, doing layout in QuarkXPress, surfing the Web or taking a break fighting for survival on some alien world, on-screen images should look great at any resolution.

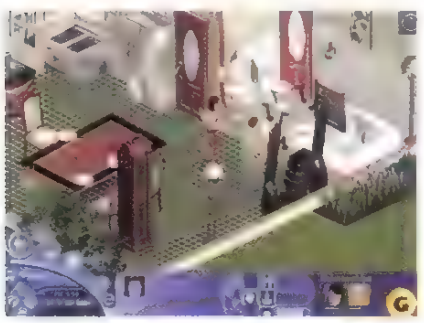
"Graphics designers can expect to take their artistry to a higher level with less hassle using the Voodoo4 4500 PCI," said Bryan Speece, director of Macintosh business development for 3dfx Interactive. "The Voodoo architecture simultaneously delivers better visual quality and higher performance for users of professional Macintosh applications. This means graphics designers, publishers and content creators can expect smoother, cleaner, faster video performance with better visual quality—it's just a better tool."

For $179.99 MSRP, the Voodoo4 4500 PCI exploits the VSA 100 2D/3D graphics processing chip. The Voodoo4 4500 PCI delivers decent levels of Macintosh 3D performance with an impressive fill rate of 333 Megapixels per second. Together with 32 MB of high-speed graphics memory and QuickTime multimedia support, the Voodoo 4 4500 will satisfy many owners looking for more graphics power for less money. Only 3dfx offers full support for Glide, QuickDraw 3D and Apple OpenGL on one card, ensuring compatibility with the widest array of Macintosh 3D titles. HRG

MAC GAMES

By Mike Dixon

In past years, picking the top five Mac games would have been a cinch. For the second year in a row, game publishers have been releasing record numbers of Mac-compatible games, especially triple-A titles. The choices are numerous, and while Apple might be experiencing a downturn in sales (as are most other PC manufacturers at the moment), Mac game publishers still seem bullish on the future of the Mac as a game platform. The following products are by no means the only high-quality items recommended for Mac users and retailers who sell Mac systems. However, these items do stand out from the pack due to their impact on the Mac game industry and overall popularity.



1. The Sims • Aspyr Media

The Game: A completely original "people simulation," this game allows the gamer to choose everything from when their "sims" to go to the bathroom to what career path they take for each person in each household.

The Sims has broken new ground in the simulation genre, and sold tons of units this year. Not surprising, *The Sims* was just as popular on the Mac as it was on the PC. *The Sims* is tops in this list due to its appeal by all types of gamers, its expandability (via *Livin' Large* expansion pack and numerous online add-ons), as well as its addictiveness. Aspyr Media's warm relationship with Electronic Arts paved the way for *The Sims* to release on the Mac. Prior to *The Sims,* Aspyr published EA Sports' *Madden NFL 2000* in late 1999, which was the first mainstream football game for the Mac and continues to be one of the more popular games currently played.

2. Diablo II
Blizzard Entertainment

The Game: The sequel to the role-playing smash hit game *Diablo, Diablo II*, allows the gamer to assume one of five different characters on a series of missions to thwart the evil "Lord of Terror" that is plaguing the countryside.

While *Diablo II* didn't ship simultaneously with the PC version (as had been hoped), this game was one of the most anticipated Mac titles this year. *Diablo II*'s biggest strengths are its incredible amount of game play coupled with even more longevity through its cross platform network gaming features. Blizzard is now shipping *Diablo II* in a hybrid box (Mac/PC on the same disks), but gamers should be warned to check boxes carefully in stores. There are PC-only and Mac-only boxes still out there.

3. Unreal Tournament • MacSoft

The Game: Based in the future, the "New Earth Government" is trying to reduce violence in its deep space mining colonies. Therefore, the government has decided to organize fighting tournaments that will allow miners to let off some steam. *Unreal Tournament* is a first-person shooter where the gamer assumes one of the miners, and attempts win the tournament.

Prior to MacSoft's shift to releasing more "family friendly" games this fall, they released *Unreal Tournament* earlier this year. *UT* is considered by many as a major challenger to *Quake III: Arena*. While *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* are both sequels to previously titles and available for Mac, *UT* is considered by many Mac gamers to be a more original, better-looking, and a more entertaining title than *Quake III*. The online networking features offer extended game play and several modifications can be downloaded from the Internet to allow more single-player gaming.

4. Baldur's Gate
Graphic Simulations

The Game: *Baldur's Gate* is an After *Dungeons and Dragons*-based role-playing game set in TSR's Forgotten Realms campaign. The gamer controls a party of six, who barter and chat with various characters in the game, as well as fight various monsters as well. Gamers can the game strictly by the rules set forth in AD&D.

Many in the Mac game industry almost "wrote off" this game as a viable title for Mac users due to its extremely late release for Mac (*Baldur's Gate II* was shipping for PC when *Baldur's Gate* shipped for Mac). To make matters worse, network play was temporarily left out of the Mac version mainly due to the time it would have taken to get it into the game, and thus delaying the release even further. Network play will be a downloadable updater when it is complete (expected in the next month or so). Still, this game provides nice graphics, a rich storyline, and a vast and extremely lengthy amount of game play even in single player mode, and when the network features are enabled, *Baldur's Gate* will be even more enjoyable.

5. Radeon AGP (2D/3D graphics accelerator card)
ATI Technologies

ATI has been making video cards for Apple for many years. Only recently has Apple's latest systems contained a decent 3D card capable of powering next generation 3D games and approaching the quality and power found on the PC. Mac gamers got a real boost when ATI brought their Radeon card to the Mac (via bill-to-order option at Apple's online store). Superior to ATI's Rage 128 series, its only competition is from 3dfx's Voodoo 5500...a true gamer's card. ATI nudged out the Voodoo 5 card due to its compatibility with Apples DVD player, its AGP configuration, and the Radeon has slightly better drivers overall. The Voodoo 5 does offer compelling quality improvements in many games, thanks to its full screen anti aliasing (a feature that the Radeon will offer later...via software update). Both ATI and 3dfx will need to keep an eye out for nVidia, who has indicated their entry into the Mac market is very close at hand.

Honorable Mention:
Deus Ex • Aspyr Media

One Mac game that deserves an honorable mention this year should be *Deus Ex*, published by Aspyr Media. This game truly offered original game play, a compelling and believable story for a first-person shooter game, and longevity. The downsides to *Deus Ex* were its heavy system requirements (prefers a high end G3 or G4 with over 100 MB RAM available) and the lack of network game play. Otherwise, *Deus Ex* deserves high marks for all that it brings to the table.

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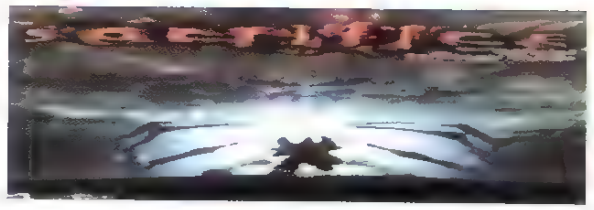

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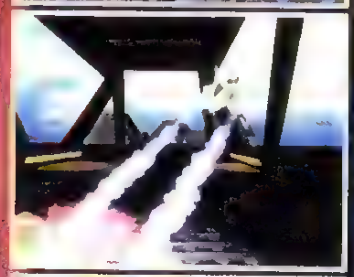

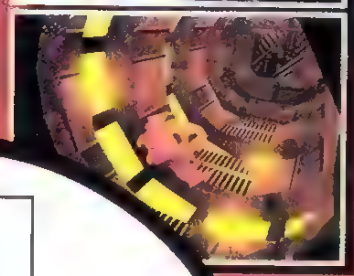

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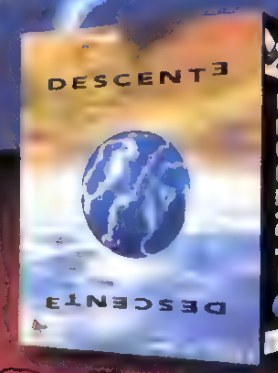

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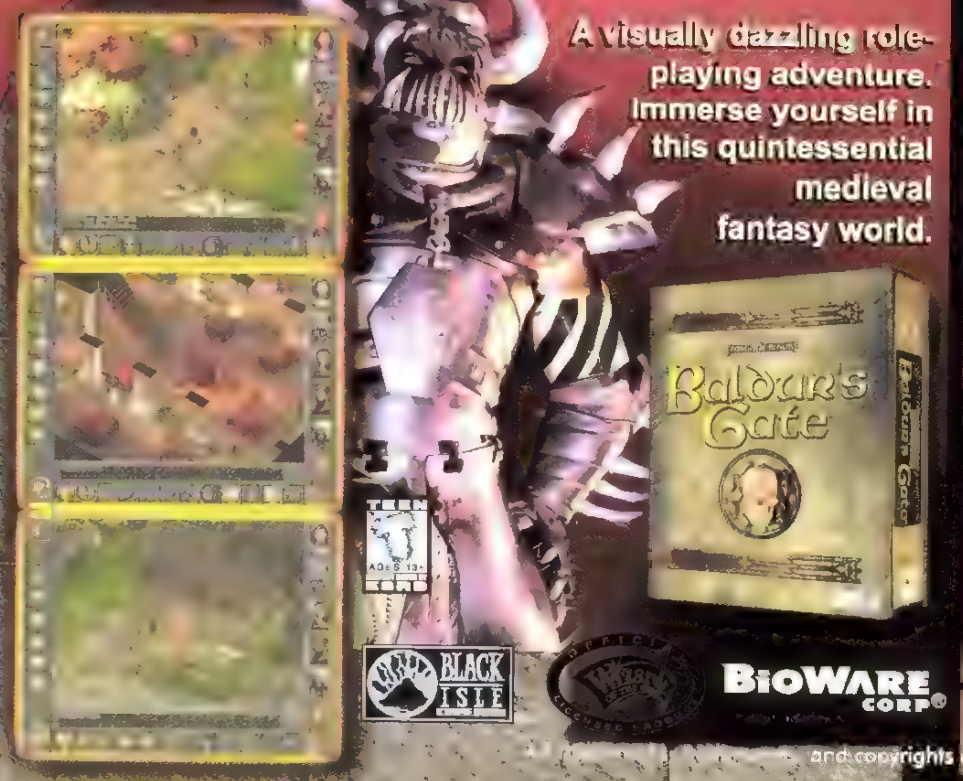

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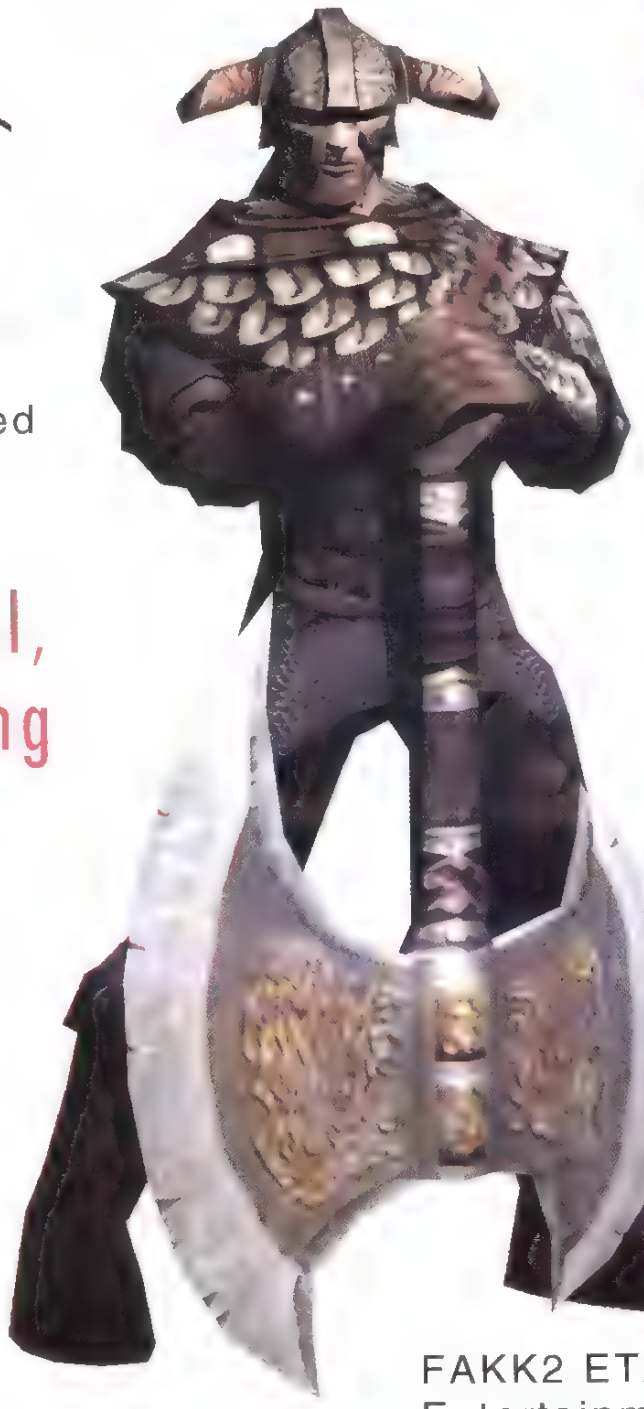
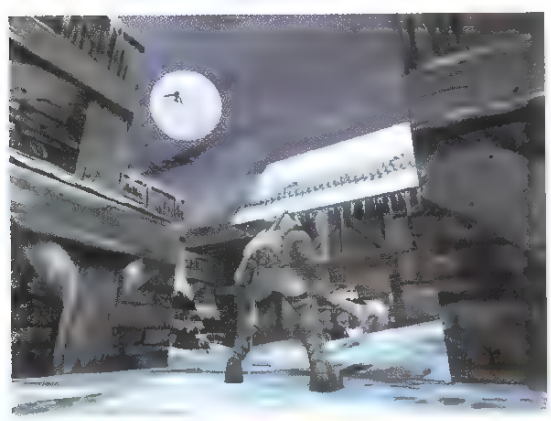
"A new gaming trilogy based on The Blair Witch Project is redefining FEAR for computer games." — *RUE MORGUE*



"Dashes of the X-Files and Twin Peaks, combined with great sound and graphics, make [the Blair Witch Series] a winner."— *Fortune Magazine*

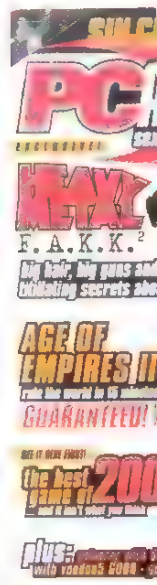
"What we found was a beautiful, entertaining, and intense gaming experience. Make no mistake, Rune is an awesome game."
— *Gamecenter*

Rune "9/10" and "Editor's Choice"
—*Gamecenter.com*



"The graphics in Rune are excellent, with an exceptional attention to detail on just about every level."
— *Amazon.com*

"Great of
game of



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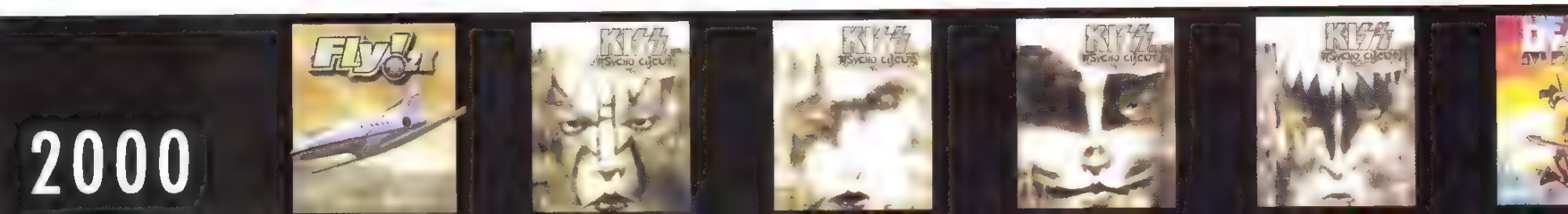


THIS WAS A PRETTY GOOD YEAR.

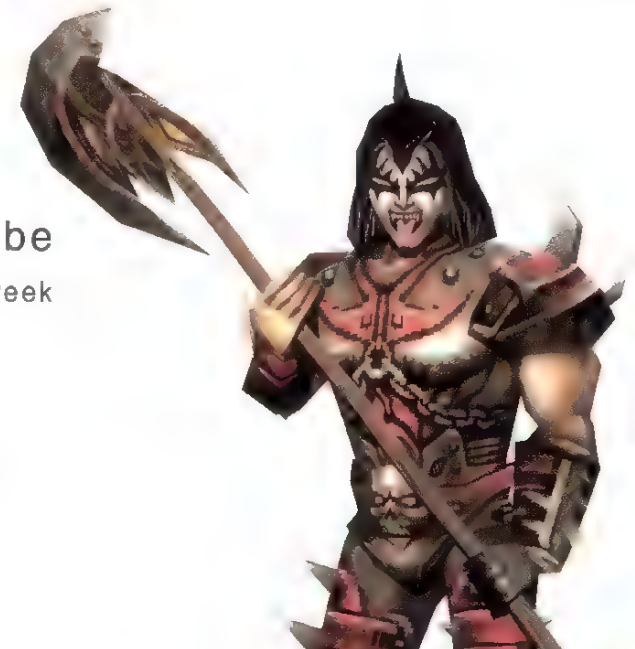
letail." — *SPIN*

"The bottom line: Deep gameplay and cross-platform online racing make 4x4 Evolution the best 4x4 game going."
— *Gamecente*

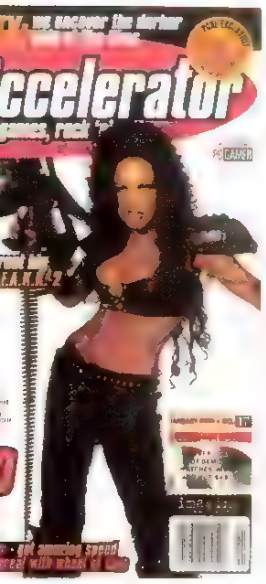
"Lovely to look at and an absolute pleasure to drive and tinker with.."
— PC Gamer

"EVO is definitely one of the must-have games of the year."
— *Computer Game Fan*

"Evo is for the hardcore, whether they be hardcore into trucks or games." — Autoweek

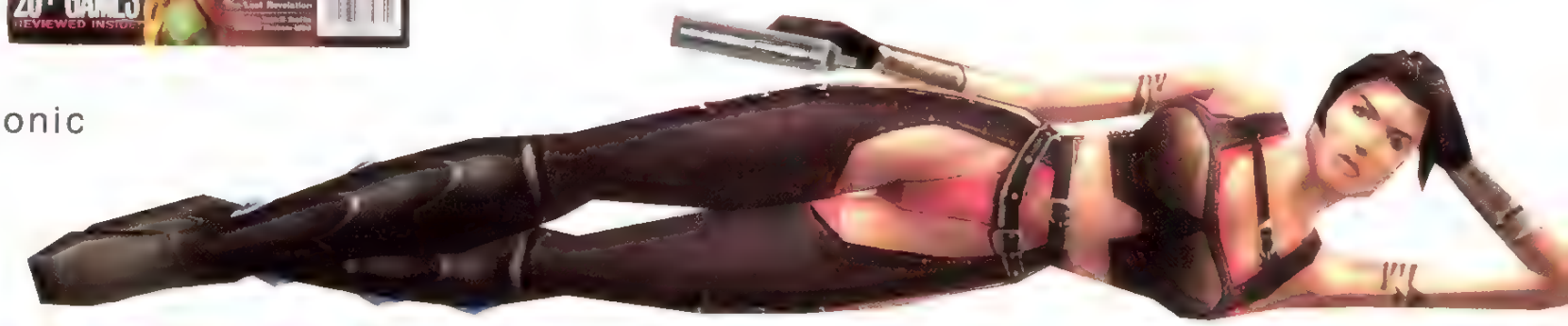


f-road action makes EVO a contender for the year" — *Computer Game Fan*



"Combining the fun of Kiss and Todd McFarlane's *Kiss Psycho Circus* in a video game was a very very good idea."
— *Maximum PC.com*

"This game rocks!"
— *Jane Magazine on KISS*



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e" – *PC Gamer*

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"This is art...a beautiful game to behold."– *IGN.com*

"Shadowbane is truly spectacular."— *Daily Radar*

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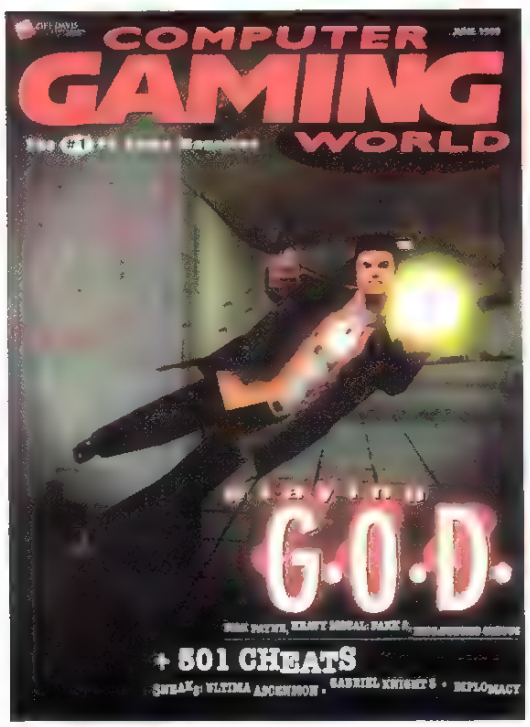

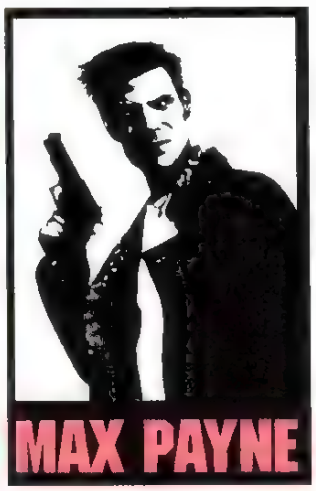

"Max Payne, 3D Realms and Remedy Entertainment is about to bust open a can of whoop ass all over the computer gaming world!"

— *Voodoo Extreme*

"Tropico looks like one of the most innovative and downright fun titles of the year." — Eurogamer

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— *Gamecenter*

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by gamers who love games." — *SPIN*

"Bungie strikes a cord with both Anime and combat fans with their all-out fighting escapade starring Konoko. It is the new face of third-person action adventure."

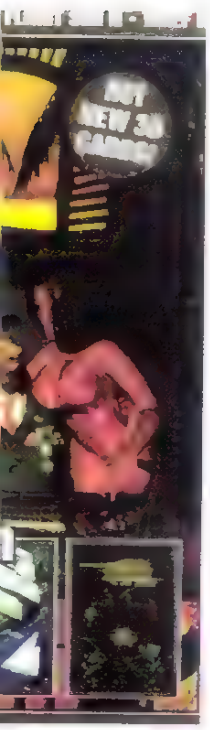
— *GameSpy*

by

" — *PC Gamer*

"We can't wait for Oni!"

- *PC Gamer*



"Stonghold is impressive"

— *IGN PC*

"Stronghold brings an interesting mix of real-time strategy and city building" — *GameSpot*

"Duke Nukem Forever... the most anticipated game ever." —*3D Action Planet*

"In Kingdom Under Fire, Korean Developer, Phantagram, successfully mixes a dollop of Diablo II™ with a vat of StarCraft™ and cooks up one impressive RTS game." — *GameSpy*

ICO SHADOWBANE DUKE NUKEM FOREVER STRONGHOLD MAX PAYNE GODGAMES

soles and software since the launch last fall, and "from the stores' perspective, games are contributing steadily to the growth of our video division, typically renting from $3.99 to $5.99 for five nights," he adds. Nine-month figures show overall rental revenues for 7,300 worldwide stores up 10.1% to $3.07 billion, compared to $2.79 billion for the 1999 period, with same store increases up 5%. Online rentals at www.blockbuster.com as of October 30 were available in Austin, TX, and Denver, with other markets to be added soon. Online sales are also increasing, with recent offerings for PSX, PS2 and N64 under "new releases," "hot sellers" and "coming soon" categories. For the holiday quarter, Lundeen expects a big boost from Blockbuster's agreement to rent PS2 consoles and games at all U.S. outlets, with hardware $19.99 for five nights with a $200 deposit and rental agreement. There's also a consumer offer for a $20 PS2 special edition GiftCard. The chain launched the new platform with a 61-day sweepstakes from October 1 through November 30, with one PS2 console given away each day to online registrants.

For the 165 upscale, mass merchant ShopKo stores based in Green Bay, WI, the first nine months were slightly down from last year, reports Steve Boyea, vice president-divisional merchandise manager. He points to Dreamcast software and accessories as one bright spot, GBC slightly ahead for hardware and very much better for software and accessories. PC/Mac entertainment software was very strong but edutainment was way down, similar to NPD figures, and PSX hardware was way down, with software and accessories slow in anticipation of PS2. "Our core shopper is the mom who works," he notes, "and it's vital for us to make her shopping experience fast and pleasant." ShopKo took no preorders on PS2 and filled about 20 to 25% of requests. "Thank goodness for the EA titles that lent credibility to the launch in the absence of many first-party titles," he observes. For the holidays, he'll be watching the demand for DVD movies for the PS2, as he expects most consoles won't be opened until Christmas. "I think the wild card is Dreamcast, as it will depend on how many parents are converted over to the hardware, with the SegaNet launch certainly a positive factor on software sales," he adds. He also sees a strong holiday for GBC, driven by *Pokémon*, with N64 a question mark dependent on more titles like *Majora's Mask*.

At the Musicland Group, Scott Burtness, vice president, hardlines and merchandising for 78 Media Play and over 200 On Cue outlets, reports that overall PC entertainment sales-the core of their software business-were very strong for the first three quarters compared to last year. On the videogame side, in a transition year for PlayStation and Nintendo, he sees Dreamcast continuing to gain share, "and SegaNet looks like a great online gaming experience that also will drive software sales." For the holidays, he's very bullish on the PC side, looking to titles like EA's *Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2*, Microsoft's *MechWarrior 4*, Disney's *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire Sports Edition*, EA's *NBA Live 2001* and Sierra's *Tribes 2*. For videogames, he observes that the PS2 launch has brought in a lot of customers, with the stores filling about a third of preorders and hopes for the balance by Christmas. PSX software continues to do well with strong titles like Square's

Continued on page 29

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upcoming *Final Fantasy IX*. For Dreamcast, he sees Sega's own titles *Shenmue*, *NBA 2K1* and *NFL 2K1* "really driving system sales and selling a lot of hardware." GBC also should have a good holiday for hardware, software and accessories, propelled by the recent *Gold and Silver* releases, and N64 should do OK with titles like *Banjo Tooie*.

While Wal-Mart chose not to participate officially in this survey, based on its market share of Sony games products, it's estimated the stores and online site received about 15% of the initial PS2 shipment or about 75,000 units. A big "if" for the holiday game market is Walmart.com, which closed down in late September for several weeks for "remodeling." While the brick-and-mortar stores continue to post double-digit quarterly increases, there was concern about the company's commitment to the Web after more than four years of false starts. However, recent previews of the relaunched site by several investment analysts were very positive about the improved search function and layout. Erik Hagerman, Walmart.com creative director, says he got his ideas from the wide aisles and plentiful signage in Wal-Mart's easy-to-use supercenters. H. Lee Scott Jr., Wal-Mart CEO H. Lee Scott Jr. insists that, "While we care about the numbers, the primary concern this Christmas has got to be customer service and establishing a base that you can build on in the future."

HOLIDAY PROMOS ABOUND

Bonus catalogs and online promotions are among the favorite marketing tools for the holidays. Babbage's Etc. is distributing a 100-plus-page book in mid-November and will have a gift givers' guide in early December. Dan DeMatteo notes that the chain has an ongoing promo on Barnesandnoble.com's software page, and soon will benefit by an in-store integration of the Internet and dotcom divisions, with Babbage's Etc. continuing to provide all games fulfillment.

At Electronics Boutique, major catalog distribution was set for early November, early December and post-holiday to catch new console and PC owners, Jeff Griffiths reports. For EBworld, Seth Levy notes the exceptional fulfillment performance of last year, and promises that the focus again will be on customer service.

At ShopKo, Steve Boyea is very enthused over a new computer software program that will preload special advertised game discount offers for the POS (point-of-sale) checkout terminals. Cashiers will instantly credit the buy a game, get a free accessory offer, or a 20% discount on two purchases, as examples.

For Musicland's Media Play and On Cue stores, Scott Burtness is excited about the first week long, mid-December run for the chain's twice-a-year "More Byte for Your Buck" megabyte sales event promotion. It will feature all platform games, with added support from promo ads in the Sunday newspaper circulars.

Babbage's Etc. chief DeMatteo sums up the feeling of many retailers, observing that "PS2 is a much broader platform with the bonus of CD audio and DVD video playback that will be the first experience of many gamers with the new technology. If Sony delivers the three million units promised by March, this will increase the 10 million U.S. DVD homes forecast at year end by 20% or more. The only thing that will sell a new videogame platform is great games, and with the initial two dozen or so at launch as an example, Sony has hit a high-water mark." HRG

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RELEASE SCHEDULE

Sponsored by: Gigex

nintendo 64

Game	Manuf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
40 Winks	Infogrames	7/00	10/00
Aidyn Chron cles	THQ	12/00	3/01
Air Boardin' USA	ASCII	11/00	2/01
Batman Beyond	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Beast Wars 64	Bam	9/00	12/00
Caesar's Palace 64	Crave	9/00	12/00
Carnivale	Vatica	10/00	1/01
Conker's B.F.D.	Nintendo	12/00	3/01
Dinosaur Planet	Rare	10/00	1/01
Donald Duck	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Eternal Darkness	Nintendo	11/00	2/01
Mario Artist	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
Mega Man 64	Capcom	11/00	1/01
Mini Racers	Nintendo	TBA	TBA
Nightmare Cr. 2	Activision	TBA	TBA
Paper Mario Story	Nintendo	11/00	2/01
Pokemon GS Stad.	Nintendo	12/00	3/01
Polaris Snoc. 2001	Vatical	9/00	12/00
Resident Evil Zero	Capcom	TBA	Q4
Seadoo Hydro. 2001	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Star Wars: Battle for Naboo	LLcas Arts	9/00	12/00
Super Bowling	Tommo	9/00	12/00
VR Powerboat	Vatical	10/00	1/01
WCW Back. Asslt	Electronic Arts	9/00	12/00
Wildwaters	Ubi Soft	TBA	Q3
World Lg. Soccer	Southpeak	TBA	TBA
X-Men: Mutant Ac.	Activsion	TBA	TBA

playstation

Game	Manuf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
102 Dalmatians	Eidos	8/00	11/00
Aladdin	SCEA	11/00	2/01
Alone Dark 4	Infogrames	12/00	3/01
Army Men: Arc. Blast	3DO	10/00	1/01
Backyard Football	Infogrames	10/00	1/01
Batman Racing	Ubi Soft	11/00	2/01
Big O. Bass 2	Konami	9/00	12/00
Blaster Master B.A.	Sunsoft	10/00	2/01
Blues Clues	Mattel	10/00	1/01
Bugs and Taz	Infogrames	9/00	12/00
Burs Wakeboarding	Crave	10/00	2/01
Carmageddon 2	Interplay	TBA	TBA
Champ. Mot. 2001	THQ	9/00	12/00
Digimon World 2	Bandai	10/00	1/01
Extreme Hybrid Rac.	Mattel	9/00	12/00
F1 Grand Prix 2000	Eidos	9/00	12/00
Game Doctor MD	Dig. Innovations	9/00	12/00
In Cold Blood	Midway	9/00	12/00
Inspector Gadget	Ubi Soft	11/00	2/01
Kasparov Chess	Interplay	9/00	12/00
Lion King: Simba	Activision	9/00	12/00
Martian Gothic	Take 2	10/00	1/01
M.H. Pro BMX	Activision	12/00	3/01
MTV: Lavin BMX	THQ	10/00	1/01
Nascar Racers	Hasbro Int.	11/00	2/01
Nicktoons Racing	Hasbro Int.	11/00	2/01
Persona 2	Atlus	9/00	12/00
Razor Free Scooter	Crave	9/00	12/00
Rayman 2 B. School	Ubi Soft	11/00	2/01
Rescue Heroes	Mattel	10/00	2/01
Road El Dorado	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Rogue Spear	Redstorm	9/00	12/00
Scooby Doo	THQ	10/00	1/01
Sea Doo Hydrocross	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Sesame St. Sports	New Kid Co.	8/00	11/00
Time Crisis: P.T.	Namco	10/00	1/01
Vanishing Point	Acclaim	9/00	12/00
VIP	Ubi Soft	12/00	3/01
X Men: Mutant Wars	Activision	TBA	TBA

macintosh

Game	Manuf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
Alien vs. Predator	Fox Interact.	TBA	Q4
Anachronox	Ion Storm	TBA	Q4
Black and White	Lionhead	TBA	Q4
Cartoon Combat	Creative Edge	TBA	Q4
Combat Misson: BO	Big Time Soft.	TBA	Q4
C.o.L.: InterLock	Den'net Soft.	TBA	Q4
Deimos Rising	Ambrosia	TBA	Q4
Dragon's Lair 3D	Blue Byte	TBA	Q4
Driver	GT interactive	9/00	12/00
Eternal War	Past Tree, Inc.	TBA	Q4
Experience	The Whole Exp.	TBA	Q4
F/A-18 Hornet: Gold	Graphic Sim.	TBA	Q4
Grimoire	Elysium Digital	TBA	Q4
Halo	Bungie Soft.	TBA	Q4
Heart of Darkness	Infogrames	TBA	Q4
Heretic II	Logicware	TBA	Q4
Interstate '76	Logicware	TBA	Q4
Oni	Bungie	10/00	1/01
Panty Raider	Sim & Shust.	TBA	Q4
Peregrine	Enigma Soft.	TBA	Q4
Pool of Radiance	Mindscape	TBA	Q4
Riddle of the Sphinx	DreamCatcher	9/00	12/00
Rogue Spear	MacSoft	9/00	12/00
Screamin' Demons	Parsoft	TBA	Q4
Shadowbane	Wolfpack	TBA	Q4
Silver	Infogrames	TBA	Q4
Star Trek: DS9 Fallen	Sim & Shust.	9/00	12/00
Warcraft III	Blizzard Ent.	TBA	Q4
Worms Arm.	MacSoft	9/00	12/00
X Plane	MacSoft	8/00	11/00

PC pc gaming

Game	Manuf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
Age of Sail II	Take On Soft	10/00	1/01
Airline Tycoon	Interplay	10/00	1/01
Alone in the Dark 4	Infogrames	2/01	5/01
America	Data Becker	10/00	1/01
Anachronox	Eidos	1/01	3/01
Arcanum	Sierra	11/00	2/01
Arcatera	Ubi Soft	8/00	1/01
B-17 Flying Fortress	Hasbro	10/00	1/01
Batman Racing	Ubi Soft	12/00	3/01
Black & White	Electronic Arts	11/00	2/01
Carmageddon 3	GT Soft.	9/00	12/00
Chicken Run	Eidos	9/00	12/00
Commanche 4	Nova Logic	10/00	1/01
Commandos 2	Eidos	12/00	3/01
Conquest: F.W.	MS	11/00	2/01
Dragon's Lair 3D	Blue Byte	TBA	Q4
Duke Nukem Forever	GT Interactive	10/00	1/01
Dungeon Seige	Microsoft	6/01	9/01
Empire Earth	Sierra	2/01	5/01
Evil Dead	THQ	9/00	12/00
Fate of the Dragon	Eidos	12/01	2/01
F1 Champ. 2000	EA	9/00	12/00
F1 Grand Prix 2000	Eidos	9/00	12/00
F-18 Expansion	Titus	10/00	1/01
Freedom: First Res.	Redstorm	9/00	12/00
Freelancer	Microsoft	6/01	9/01
Gangsters 2	Eidos	12/00	3/01
Gorka Morka	Ripcord	2/01	5/01
Halo	Bungie	3/01	6/01
Harpoon 4	Mindscape	1/01	4/01
H&D 2	Take On Soft	2/01	5/01
Hired Teams: Trial	Thought Guild	TBA	Q4
Hostile Waters	Interplay	12/00	3/01
I'm Going In	Eidos	9/00	12/00
Insane	Codemasters	11/00	2/01
Jumbo Jack	Sierra	TBA	Q4
Kingdom Under Fire	Gathering	10/00	1/01
Leg. of Blademast.	Ripcord	10/00	1/01
Leg. of M & M	3DO	1/01	4/01
Links Courses 2001	Microsoft	12/00	3/01
Loose Cannon	Microsoft	3/01	6/01
Mafia	Take On Soft	1/01	4/01
Market Mogul	Interplay	9/00	12/00
Max Payne	Gathering	2/01	5/01
Mech Commander 2	Microsoft	3/014	6/01
Monopoly Tycoon	Hasbro	10/00	1/01
M.O.U.T. 2025	Ripcord	11/00	2/01
Myst 3 Exile	Broderbund	12/00	3/01
NASCAR Racing 4	Sierra	11/00	2/01
Neverwinter Nights	Interplay	6/01	9/01
NBA Live 2001	EA	10/00	1/01
Oni	Bungie	10/00	1/01
Peacemakers	Red Storm	11/00	2/01
Pod Racing 2	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
PoR: Ruins of Myth	Mindscape	1/01	4/01
Project Eden	Eidos	12/00	3/01
Quake III Mission Pack	Activision	9/00	12/00
Red Faction	THQ	TBA	Q3/01
Relic Hunter	Octagon	TBA	Q4
Rogue Spear Plat.	Redstorm	12/00	3/01
Row. Batt. Britain	Empire Int.	10/000	1/01
Second Genesis	Epic Games	TBA	Q3
Shadow Company 2	Ubi Soft	TBA	Q3
Sierra Sports G.R.	Sierra	10/00	1/01
Silent Hunter 2	Mindscape	12/00	3/01
Simsville	Electronic Arts	2/01	5/01
Sim Theme Park 2	Maxis	10/00	1/01
Skip Barber Racing	Bethesda	11/00	2/01
Sovereign	Verant	3/01	9/01
Star Fleet Commander 2	Interplay	9/00	12/00
Stars!	Empire Int.	12/00	3/01
Startopia	Eidos	11/00	2/01
Star Trek Dominion Wars	Sim. & Schust.	1/01	4/01
Star Wars Online	LucasArts	TBA	TBA/01
Stunt GP	Infogrames	10/00	1/01
Stupid Invaders	Ubi Soft	10/00	1/01
Summoner	THQ	1/00	3/01
Team Fortress 2	Sierra	1/01	4/01
The Settlers IV	Blue Byte	TBA	Q4
The Ward	ODI	10/00	1/01
Throne of Darkness	Sierra	11/00	2/01
Tribes 2	Sierra	9/00	12/00
Undying	Electronic Arts	11/00	2/01
US Open 2000	Dreamcatcher	10/00	1/01
WWF With Authority	THQ	TBA	TBA
Warcraft III	Blizzard	3/01	6/01
Warriors of M & M	3DO	9/00	12/00
Werewolf the Apoc.	ASC Games	9/00	12/00
World Is Not Enough	Electronic Arts	12/00	3/01
X-Com Alliance	Microprose	3/01	6/01
X Plane	GT Soft	9/00	12/00

Continued on page 23 (after Holiday Retail Games Guide)

RELEASE SCHEDULE

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dreamcast

Game	Manf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
18 Wheeler	Sega	11/00	2/01
Armada II	Metro 3D	12/00	3/01
BANG	Redstorm	9/00	12/00
Banga -o	Crave	10/00	1/01
bleem!	bleem	9/00	12/00
Broadband Adapter	Sega	12/00	1/01
Charge and Blast	Infogrames	3/01	12/00
Coaster Works	Infogrames	9/00	12/00
Dark Angel	Metro 3D	12/00	3/01
Daytona USA Online	Sega	TBA	TBA/01
DC Smash Pack	Sega	10/00	1/01
Deer Avenger	Berkeley	10/00	1/01
Donald Duck	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Dragon Rider	Ubi Soft	10/00	1/01
Ducat World	Acclaim	9/00	12/00
ESPN Links Golf	Konami	9/00	12/00
Evil Dead	THQ	9/00	12/00
Evil Twin	Ubi Soft	11/00	2/01
Florgan Brothers	Sega	TBA	TBA
GorkaMorka	Ripcord	2/01	5/01
Half-Life	Sega	10/00	1/01
Heroes 3 M&M	Ubi Soft	10/00	1/01
IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda	10/00	1/01
Iron Aces	Infogames	9/00	12/00
Legacy of Blademast	Ripcord	11/00	2/01
Mars Matrix	Capcom	11/00	2/01
Matt Hoff Pro BMX	Activision	11/00	2/01
Max Steel	Mattel	9/00	12/00
Metropolis S.R.	Sega	10/00	1/01
M.O.U.T. 2025	Ripcord	11/00	2/01
NHL 2K2	Sega	TBA	TBA
Outtrigger	Sega	11/00	2/01
Peacemakers	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Phantasy Star Online	Sega	10/00	1/01
Playmobil Hype	Ubi Soft	10/00	1/01
Polaris Snocross	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Project Justice	Capcom	11/00	2/01
Sierra Sports G.R.	Sierra	10/00	1/01
Soldier of Fortune	Crave	12/00	3/01
Sonic Adventure 2	Sega	3/01	6/01
Speed Devils 2	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Stunt GP	Infogrames	11/00	2/01
Stupid Invaders	Ub Soft	10/00	1/01
Swat 3D	Berkeley	10/00	1/01
System Shock 2	Vatical	10/00	1/01
The Mummy	Konami	12/00	3/01
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	12/00	3/01
Vanishing Point	Acclaim	9/00	12/00
WSB 2K2	Sega	TBA	TBA

playstation 2

Game	Manf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
Age of Empires II	Konami	TBA	TBA
Army Men: A.A. 2	3DO Company	TBA	TBA
Army Men: S.H. 2	3DO Company	TBA	TBA
Beast Wars	BAM	TBA	TBA
Carrier	Jaleco	TBA	TBA
Dark Cloud	SCEA	TBA	TBA
Dinosaur	Ub Soft	TBA	TBA
Driving Emot. Type-S	Square EA	TBA	TBA/01
ESPN NBA2Night	Konami	TBA	TBA
ESPN NFL PrimeTime	Konami	TBA	TBA
Final Fantasy X	Square	TBA	TBA
Final Fantasy X	Square	TBA	TBA
Gran Turismo 2000	SCEA	TBA	TBA
Gunslinger	Activision	TBA	TBA
ico	SCEA	10/00	1/01
Jungle Book	Ubi Soft	TBA	TBA
Knockout Kings 2001	Electronic Arts	12/00	3/01
MDK 2: Arm.	Interplay	TBA	TBA
M.G.S. 2	Konami	TBA	TBA
NBA Live 2001	Electronic Arts	10/00	1/01
NCAA GameB. 2001	SCEA	9/00	12/00
Oni	Rockstar	10/00	1/01
Onimusha Warlords	Capcom	10/00	1/01
Project Eden	Eidos	TBA	TBA
Rayman 2	Ub Soft	TBA	TBA
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	8/00	11/00
Red Faction	THQ	12/00	3/01
Run Like Hell	Interplay	TBA	TBA
Shadows of Destiny	Konami	TBA	TBA
Silent Hill 2	Konami	TBA	TBA
Stunt GP	Titus	TBA	TBA
SW Ep. I: StarFighter	LucasArts	10/00	1/01
SW Super Bomb R	LucasArts	TBA	TBA
The Bouncer	SquareSoft	10/00	1/01
The Lost	Crave	TBA	TBA
Top Gear Dare Dev.	Crave	9/00	12/00
UFC	Crave	TBA	TBA
WDL	3DO Company	TBA	TBA
WipeOut Fusion	SCEA	TBA	TBA
World Not Enough	Electronic Arts	TBA	TBA
Z.O.E.	Konami	12/00	3/01

gameboy color

Game	Manf./Publisher	Pre-Book Date	Release Date
3D Ultra Pinbal	Havas	9/00	12/00
Antz Racing	Electronic Arts	10/00	1/01
Army Men: Arc Blast	3DO	9/00	12/00
Barbie Pet Rescue	Matte	10/00	1/01
Batman Racing	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
Carnivale	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Cat Constr Zone 2	Matte	10/00	1/01
Croc 2	THQ	10/00	1/01
Dexter's Lab	Bam	9/00	12/00
Doug's Big Game	New Kid Co	9/00	12/00
Dragon's Lair	Capcom	10/00	1/01
Dragon Tales	New Kid Co.	9/00	12/00
Emp. New Groove	Ub Soft	9/00	12/00
Force 21	Ub Soft	9/00	12/00
Frisbee Golf	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	9/00	12/00
Harley-Davidson	Infogrames	9/00	12/00
Hercules	Titus	11/00	2/01
Holye Card	Havas	9/00	12/00
Inspector Gadget	Ubi Soft	9/00	12/00
J.W. Cue Ball	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Kirby's Tilt N Tumble	Nintendo	9/00	12/00
Lego Racers	Lego Media	10/00	1/01
Lego Stunt Rally	Lego Media	10/00	1/01
Looney Tunes C.A.	Infogrames	10/00	1/01
Looney Tunes Racing	Infogrames	10/00	1/01
M&Ms Candy	Majesco	9/00	12/00
Mario Tennis	Nintendo	10/00	1/01
Mega Man Extreme	Capcom	10/00	1/01
Merlin	Electronic Arts	9/00	12/00
Meta Walker	Capcom	10/00	1/01
Mission Bravo	Mattel	10/00	1/01
Monster Rancer Ex	Tecmo	7/00	10/00
MS Pinball Arcade	Electro Source	7/00	10/00
NASCAR Heat	Majesco	9/00	12/00
NASCAR Racers	Majesco	9/00	12/00
NBA Live 2	THQ	10/00	1/010
Nicktoons Racing	Majesco	9/00	12/00
Playmobil Hype	Ub Soft	9/00	12/00
Pocket Racers	Interplay	10/00	1/01
Pokemon Crystal	Nintendo	TBA	TBA
Pokemon Puzzle Ch	Nintendo	9/00	12/00
Racin Ratz	Matte	9/00	12/00
Return of Ninja	Natsume	10/00	1/01
Road Champs	Activision	9/00	12/00
Robin Hood	Electronic Arts	9/00	12/00
Rocketts Sleep Over	Mattel	9/00	12/00
Scooby Doo CC	THQ	11/00	2/01
Seadoo 2001	Vatica	10/00	1/01
Ses Street Sports	New Kid Co	10/00	1/01
Tom and Jerry	New Kid Co	9/00	12/00
VIP	Ub Soft	12/00	3/01
VR Powerboat	Vatical	10/00	1/01
Warr. of M & M	3DO	9/00	12/00
Woody Woodp. Rac	Konami	9/00	12/00
WWF No Mercy	THQ	10/00	2/01
Xena	Titus	10/00	1/01
Yogi Bear G.B.B.	Bam	9/00	12/00
Zelda Tr. Force	Nintendo	TBA	Q4

Posting/Contact Information:

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RETAIL BUYER GUIDE

Picking the Games That Will Bring in the Profits

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GameWEEK RATING SYSTEM

A One of the best selling products for that platform. Strong marketing and word of mouth complement excellent game play and design. A "must have" product.

B Great product but lacking in some areas. Will sell well and bring in the masses but not to the extent of an "A" title.

C Good product that will sell average in terms of sales, yet not worthy of a "B." Still a solid seller particularly in niche categories.

D Either unsupported in terms of marketing, severely lacking in quality or both. This product would have benefited from further development.

F Never should have been considered, much less released. A thoroughly unimpressive product that will sell only at a drastically reduced price.

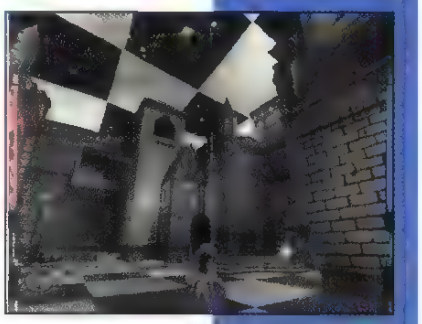
feature

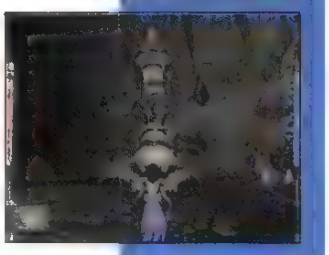
GameWEEK EDITOR'S CHOICE

American McGee's Alice

PC | MATURE M | GW A+ RATING

Publisher EA Games
Developer Rouge Entertainment
Available December
Genre Action Adventure
No. of Players 1
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info www.eagames.com





Rundown Out of all the popular children's stories in existence, probably none is as outlandish or whacked out as the classic *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. On the outside it looks like any normal children's story, but think about it: life size rabbits, mad hatters, and a deep hole that takes the main character to an alternate reality...someplace called Wonderland? Was the author taking some serious drugs when he wrote these stories? With such a wild cast of characters and circumstances and with the right designer and development team at the helm, an Wonderland based game could translate into something truly unique.

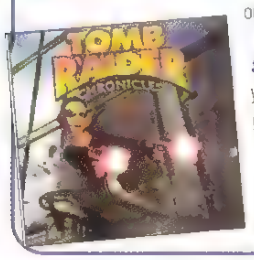
Well it's finally arrived and yes, it is indeed unique. In a word, it's extraordinary. *American McGee's Alice* will no doubt transport players to another world...a world filled with monsters, fighting chess pieces, screaming demons and an evil Queen of Hearts. The game takes place one year after Alice's last adventure in Wonderland, *Through the Looking Glass*. Wonderland is in a state of disarray and it's up to Alice to make things right. At its heart *American McGee's Alice* is a 3D platformer played via a third person perspective much like the *Tomb Raider* and *Rayman* series. As Alice, players will be able to jump, run and walk, climb, walk against walls and execute special moves. Players will face more than 15 unique challenging levels including Mad Hatter's Castle, The Fortress of Doors, The Chess Village and, ultimately, The Queen's Realm. To give the game added dimension, Alice will change her size and shape throughout the game. For example, one level may have you tower over everyone like a giant while another level has you smaller than an insect. Players will also have to solve mind bending puzzles to gain access to other areas. Of course, American's brilliant level design shines through. And don't think Alice doesn't have her share of cool weapons, either: toys become weapons that can be used against various enemies, including Jacks O' Death, Demon Dice and Jack in the Box Bombs. Players are treated to decapitations, exploding bodies and screams of death.

Utilizing the powerful *Quake III* engine, Alice's world magically comes to life. Every character and environment has been meticulously rendered to the utmost detail. What's so compelling about the game's its use of color, shadow and tone. Some environments may seem harmless, but a shift in lighting can change the whole mood and make it frightening. The character animations are also top tier quality. From Cheshire Cat's cool prance to Alice herself hacking away at enemies, it's all good.

BOTTOM LINE
With good quality 3D action platformers few and far between, American McGee's Alice is a welcome change.
—Tom Ham

Hype & Marketing

Print and Online advertising campaigns, promotions include a music tour and sci-fi convention tour; PR campaign covers both trade and consumer press; website and online community support, pre-sell programs at key retail accounts, circular ad coverage from launch through holiday, display space at ship for key retail accounts, online retail promotional programs.



Sales Pitch "Quite frankly, there will be times in the game where you'll say to yourself 'Man, this game is totally wacko!', but it's all in good fun. The graphics, gameplay and storyline are solid. *Alice* rocks.

Competition With the storyline, scope and vision of *Alice*, there is really no other competing product. You can say *Tomb Raider Chronicles*, but why bother?

MechWarrior 4

PC | TEEN T | GW A RATING

Publisher Microsoft
Developer FASA Interactive
Available December
Genre Simulation
No. of Players 1 to multi
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info www.microsoft.com

Rundown The developers of *MechWarrior* have gone back to their roots and have delivered a game filled with intense battles, over 21 different mechs and of course, solid multiplayer action. *Vengeance* has 30 single player missions and a very in depth "MechLab," where players can customize their battle machines to their liking. Also for the first time, players will be able to host their very own *MechWarrior* servers. Combined with over the-top visuals and heart pounding sound, *MechWarrior 4: Vengeance* is a must for any action fan.

BOTTOM LINE
MechWarrior 4: Vengeance was definitely worth the wait.
—Tom Ham

Hype & Marketing Page and spread ads in *CGW, PC Gamer, Computer Games, Yahoo!, Maximum PC*, and DC Comics. Trial disc polybagged with *PC Gamer* and a few others. Co-op with Creative Labs and liGames LAN locations.

Sales Pitch "This is the definitive Mech game out there, bar none."

Competition There are no other Mech games coming out for PC. There is *Mech Commander 2*, but that isn't coming out till March and besides, it's a real-time strategy title.

Mars Matrix

EVERYONE E | GW C RATING

Publisher Capcom
Developer Takumi
Available Mid February
Genre Shooter
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $19.95
Contact Info www.capcom.com 408.774.0500

Rundown *GigaWing* Heh, remember *that* one? (ahem) Okay, then. Capcom is back with its second 2D, sprite-based shooter for the Dreamcast and I'm pleased to report... this ain't no *GigaWing*! *Mars Matrix* is not only a major step above said title, it's actually one of the best 2D shooters we've seen in a while. It's also one of the most challenging (big understatement, by the way). Only the most talented twitch fans need apply here, playing *Mars Matrix* means getting out the Tylenol—this one's laced with so many enemy bullets, it's staggering to think it could be beaten without continues. Takumi gave the game extra replay value by adding elements such as Shop mode, where players can buy options using the points they've earned playing the game. Well done....

BOTTOM LINE
Look, let's be honest here; the market for this type of game is limited but with Mars Matrix, the price is right. Interested parties should be very satisfied.
—Jim Loftus

Hype & Marketing Print campaign will feature key placement in gaming pubs; special *Mars Matrix*-dedicated page on Capcom's site; the company has plans to work with retailers to create in-store POP on demand.

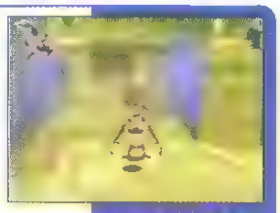
Sales Pitch "If you're craving another old-school, 2D shooter this is it!"

Competition *GigaWing* and *Gunbird 2*, also from Capcom.

Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters

EVERYONE E | GW B RATING

Publisher Infogrames
Developer A2M
Available Now
Genre Adventure
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $19.95
Contact Info www.infogrames.com 408.985.1700



Rundown This winter, infogrames bring together Bugs Bunny and Taz on a 3D platformer for the PS One. With *Time Busters*, players have the ability to control both characters in order to help Granny rebuild the Time Regulator that has been broken by one clumsy, highly caffeinated Daffy Duck. The levels are broken up into four time periods with each full of challenging mini-games. *Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters* also features a two-player cooperative mode. From the accurate cartoon voice overs to the quirky sounds and easy control scheme, this one is just fun to play.

BOTTOM LINE
Bugs & Taz are helped by its low price point, but could be hurt in the long run by the large amount of competition.
—Bryan Intihar

Hype & Marketing Four weeks of TV spots, print ads in *SI for Kids* and DC Comics, website coverage and cross promotions with Warner Bros.

Sales Pitch "An above average adventure title that can appeal to gamers of all ages."

Competition *Chicken Run, 102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue, Spyro: Year of the Dragon, Spyro 2, Muppet Monster Adventure*

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PREVIEWS

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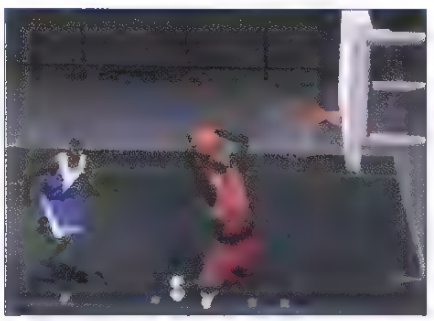
GameWEEK Previews are early looks at products that are works in progress. Previews are meant to provide current information regarding the game and its potential at the time of its release. They also represent the status of the game's genre and current marketability. While previews might be critical, they are by no means final judgment on a game and should not be solely used by retailers to base buying decisions on, as the final outcome of a game previously previewed here could be completely different at its time of release.

feature

NBA Live 2001

Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer EA Canada
Genre Sports
Available Q1 2001

By Bryan Intihar



If not for the support of Electronic Arts, there is no way that the PlayStation 2 launch could have been so successful. With stellar titles like *Madden NFL 2001*, *SSX*, *NHL 2001* and *FIFA 2001 MLS*, EA has set the standard for what sports games must live up to on this next generation console. Even better news for sports fans is that there is no sign of EA slowing down any time soon as another of its franchises is coming soon to the PS2: the *NBA Live* series. An alpha copy of the game recently found its way to the offices of *GameWEEK*, and even with a short amount of time playing the game, this one is shaping up to be another AAA title for Electonic Arts' PS2 library.

Of course, the biggest difference between the PS One and PS2 versions of *NBA Live 2001* is the visuals. The player models have received a serious face-lift, as each so accurately portrays their real life counterpart. With the power of the PS2, players' faces don't look like cut-out photographs pasted onto heads, this time, the faces are truly three dimensional. In order to pull off this feat, EA licensed LIPSinc's Echo technology lip synching and facial animation technology. With all of the emphasis on creating true-to-life player models, gamers will have no problem recognizing their favorite NBA superstars.

Fans of the series will be pleased to know that the developers have not changed much of the gameplay and control features in *NBA Live 2001*. Yet, they have gone back and fine-tuned small things such as new animations and improving the low-post game. Gamers can now pull off sweet moves such as up and unders, drop steps, baby hooks, turn-arounds and fade-aways. Also at their disposal will be crossovers, stutter steps and fakes. As always, there are a slew of new dunks to perform thanks to the game's cover boy, Kevin Garnett of the Minnesota Timberwolves who was motion captured in action. In addition, the game moves at a blistering frame-rate so gamers can expect fast paced action with a lot of breakaways and beautiful dunks.

In true EA Sports style, *NBA Live 2001* comes packed with lots of extra goodies. First, there are the standard Exhibition and Season modes, and the developers have improved the series' Franchise mode. For those who want to try out their hand at creating a player, that is also here. And while all the NBA teams are represented, there are a number of extra ones as well like the East, West, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s All-Stars. This means that all-time greats such as Wilt Chamberlain, Larry Bird and Dr. J are playable.

Another option is the One-on-One mode, which was introduced to the series last year. In this mode, gamers compete against an NBA superstar on the concrete surface of a local street park. While other companies have put similar features into its games, *NBA Live 2001* has one thing that they do not: Michael Jordan. Consumers will be able to play as or against Jordan to see how his "game" can hold up in the virtual world.

Even though the version we received was still early in the development process—there's an absence of coaches and referees, as well as long load times—it is on pace to bring in Electronic Arts even more revenue. This is one PS2 title to keep an eye on in the near future and think about pushing consumers toward pre-orders.

Paper Mario

Publisher Nintendo • ***Developer*** Intelligent Systems • ***Genre*** RPG
Available February 5, 2001

By Ben Rinaldi

During the tail-end of 16 bit era, there was a popular little Super NES game released called *Super Mario RPG* (*SM RPG*) that went on to be an instant cult classic with gamers everywhere. In retrospect, *SM RPG* has become a landmark game for many reasons. Not only was it the first game to feature the popular plumber boy in a role-playing adventure, but it was also the first time Nintendo entrusted its prized franchise to the hands of a third-party developer. The developer was none other than Squaresoft and to the chagrin of many Nintendo loyalists, it became the last Square developed title for a Nintendo console.

Nintendo has taken its sweet time to deliver a sequel, but that will all change when *Paper Mario* arrives on the scene early next year. This time around Square is not involved and Nintendo has abandoned the look and style of the SNES predecessor in favor of a hand drawn, storybook feel. Sure, the usual cast of characters from the Mario universe are present, but this time the graphical look has changed to include 2D characters (ala Sony's *PaRappa the Rapper*) set in fully interactive, three dimensional environments.

Gameplay consists of traditional RPG elements intermingled with the classic play mechanics that gamers have come to know and love in Nintendo games. Mario interacts with other characters, uses objects and enters stores to buy items. When Mario runs into an enemy, the battles are turn based and menu driven. Mario selects whether to use an item or attack an opponent, then picks from a list of special attacks, ranging from hammer attacks to ever-popular butt stomp.

Unreal Tournament

Publisher Infogrames • ***Developer*** Epic Games
Genre First-Person Shooter • ***Available*** Q1 2001

By Bryan Intihar

With the release of first the Dreamcast, then the PS2, and eventually Xbox and GameCube in 2001, many successful PC titles are now being ported to consoles. This October saw Dreamcast owners get *Quake III Arena* (*Q3A*), while the PS2 launch included a version of *Unreal Tournament* (*UT*). Infogrames has decided to port *UT* over to another existing console with a Dreamcast version.

The biggest asset to this DC version is its support of multiplayer action via the Internet. The developers hope to get *Unreal Tournament* to run smoothly online with up to eight players engaged at once, however that number may decrease by the game's release date. *UT* will also have offline multiplayer modes with either two or four players dependent on framerate issues.

DC owners will have no problems with the game's replay value as this version has over 70 maps, some of which are exclusive. *Unreal Tournament* includes popular game modes like Deathmatch, Domination and Capture the Flag. Some console gamers may be disappointed to hear that they will not be able to challenge their *Unreal Tournament* PC counterparts online like with *Quake III Arena*. But, similar to *Q3A*, the game will support Sega's broadband adapter. To make the game more comfortable to those familiar with the PC control scheme, the Dreamcast mouse and keyboard can also be used.

When it comes right down to it, the success of *Unreal* on Dreamcast will be determined by Infogrames' ability to deliver the online experience console gamers have enjoyed with *NFL 2K1* and *Quake III Arena*. Expect more information on *Unreal Tournament* in the coming weeks.

Knockout Kings 2001

Publisher Electronic Arts • ***Developer*** EA Sports
Genre Sports • ***Available*** January 2001

By Jim Loftus

Without question, without hesitation, when it comes to this version of *Knockout Kings*, EA has absolutely, unequivocally put together the best built boxing game on the planet and there's still several weeks to go before the game is slated to ship.

Trust me when I say that for the first time ever in a videogame, the Muhammad Ali you take control of *looks* like Muhammad Ali. Lewis, Hagler, De La Hoya and just about every other legend in the game look equally impressive. The arenas are sharp too, although the crowd textures could use some work. Hey, crowds shmowds—just ring the bell and I'm in there.

Gameplay-wise, the PS2 version of *Knockout Kings 2001* shares everything with its PS One cousin, and that's good news, because EA made some major improvements to the series. First and foremost, they increased the speed of the fighters and gave them better mobility. With regard to features and options, *KK 2001* has players covered: seasoned, well-timed commentary by Al Berstein and Teddy Atlas' new signature moves for each of the combatants; an improved "create-a-player" mode and more.

As it demonstrated with *Madden* on the PS2, in an EA Sports game, even the little things matter; in this case, things like killer audio effects, gradual damage mapping, subtle body language, and cut men working their magic between rounds. Overall, *KK 2001* shines like there's no tomorrow. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that, even at this stage of development, any sports fan who's been let down by the PlayStation 2 from the standpoint of graphics performance would be doing a double-take if they saw it. I know I did.

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New Console Systems Drain Crucial Dollars from Publishers

Publisher R&D rises in 2000 to reflect additional platform support

By Paul Palumbo

Publishers have been spending more in R&D in fiscal years 2000 and 2001—in some cases significantly—to support new game platforms when compared to 1999, a trend that will likely continue for a couple of years to come. Acclaim Entertainment, Electronic Arts and 3DO Company are all spending, on average, over 30% more this year on R&D than last (see data comparison table). Midway Games and Take Two are up by the "mid teens," while Interplay, Activision and have held spending close to last year's comparable in real dollar terms, even though as a per centage of '00 revenue, they are spending more.

For all publishers, total R&D investments include both expensed (current year or period) spending, and prepaid royalties and development costs. Prepaid royalties can be representative of a licensing arrangement with a rights holder, or deals with third-party development studios not part of an internal team. Some upfront R&D payments are in fact prepaid (and listed in current assets) in part to reflect the current value of the license being exploited, assuming a multi-year deal. That's the case with Activision and THQ for their licensed properties. Some of that could be paid upfront, and others may not be paid upfront, but listed as a long-term asset. Those would be listed as deferred royalties, net of the current portion or value of the license.

PUBLISHER PRE-PAID ROYALTIES AND LICENSING FEES

Publisher	2000 Pre-Paid royalties	1999 Pre-Paid royalties	% Change	% Pre-pay 1999	% Pre-Pay 2000
Take Two Interactive	21.0	19.2	9.4%	86 5%	82.0%
THQ	33.6	35.1	-4 3%	86.7%	82.2%
Activision	40.8	55.9	-27.1%	84.4%	60.7%
Interplay	20.2	20.	1.0%	65 8%	64.1%

Source Analysis of company reports by Paul A. Palumbo

"Publishers are spending more because they have to climb up the learning curve with new software development kits, not to mention the investment required to purchase the development engines," says James Lin, an analyst with Sutro & Co. "That's going to be the case for the next couple of years. These publishers have to ramp up for new platforms, and the only way to do that is through R&D dollars." With the exception of THQ, all publishers are spending more in R&D as a percentage of revenue, compared to prior or comparable reporting cycles.

R&D STRATEGY DIFFERS BY PUBLISHER

Publishers are investing anywhere from 14% to 100% of booked revenue on product R&D this year, but as last year, a closer look inside those numbers reveals a lot about how each publisher is approaching the business of development from a strategic perspective. Looking at pre-paid expenses gives a good indication if a publisher leads towards going outside for development or prefers internally driven production.

Companies with largely internal development (Midway, Acclaim, EA and 3DO) typically report those R&D expenses on the income statement under operating expenses. And the key point is that those expenses are subtracted from operating income during the reporting period, which directly impacts the bottom line.

Other publishers such as Take Two Interactive, THQ, Interplay and Activision are weighted toward a third-party development and licensing models, and those expenses often appear on the balance sheet as pre-paid assets (royalties and licensing fees), and are not expensed during the quarter. Under that particular model, R&D is typically amortized (or expensed) over a number of quarters or reporting periods, which boosts the bottom line since the bulk of those costs are not immediately subtracted from operating income.

THQ has been a long time proponent of third-party development, and keeps costs down by doing so. That said, THQ's percentage of Pre-paid royalties has dropped slightly in 2000.

Activision has experienced a much more dramatic reduction in Pre paid royalties as a percentage of total R&D, falling from 84% last year to 60% this year. EA's R&D increase is to be expected, considering the company is a market leader and the scope of their operations means they have to purchase more development kits than anyone else. The company plans to have ten titles supporting PlayStation 2 on the market before Christmas, and that requires some R&D coin. **GW**

GAME PUBLISHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT
R&D figures include all pre-paid royalties and licensing fees

Publisher	2000 YTD R & D ($Mil.)	1999 YTD R & D ($Mil.)	% Change	'00 Rev.	1999 Rev.	% '00 Rev.	% '00 Rev.
3DO Company*	34.3	26.0	31.9%	77 4	34.2	100 3%	76 0%
Interplay Entertainment***	31.5	30.4	3.6%	43 1	51.0	61.8%	59 6%
Midway Games*	89.4	76 0	17.6%	334.0	352.0	25 4%	21 6%
Electronic Arts*	261.0	199 0	31.2%	1 420 0	1,221.0	21.4%	16 3%
Acclaim Entertainment****	45.7	34 5	32 5%	172 0	320.5	14 3%	10 8%
Activision*	67.1	66.2	1.4%	572 2	436.5	15 4%	15 2%
THQ***	40.9	40.5	1 0%	102 8	130.4	31 4%	31 1%
Take Two Interactive****	25.6	22.2	15.3%	264 4	184.0	13.9%	12 1%

** – Full year fiscal 1999 vs. 2000 comparison*
**** Six-month comparison. • **** Nine-month comparison*
Source: Analysis of company reports by Paul A. Palumbo

newsbits

Fandom Teams With LaFong—Fandom, Inc. and LaFong are collaborating to create the online game Lumen. The two are describing Lumen as "the Internet's first 'pervasive' game." Our collaboration with LaFong is an exciting opportunity for Fandom to take the lead in exploring new frontiers in gaming," stated Fandom's CEO, Mark Young "We place a strong emphasis on crafting original innovations and expanding the limits of entertainment through emerging technology and LaFong is the perfect partner to help us stay on the cutting edge of the latest advances in entertainment." Lumen is expected to launch in February

Pro Gaming League Plans Event—The Babbage's/Cyberathlete Professional League Tournament, a gaming battle that will award over $120,000 in cash prizes, has been set for December 14-17 at the Hyatt Regency Dallas hotel. The event will be comprised of a $100 000 *Quake 3: Arena* singles tournament (with a $25 000 first prize), a $15,000 *Half-Life CounterStrike* team tournament and a $7,500 All-Female *Quake 3: Arena* singles tournament. Tournament sponsors include Razer and Stomped.com It's expected that over 500 combatants will fight it out for the prizes. The event will also enable amateur players to bring their own machines for a LAN area. Admission is $40 online for four days ($50 at the event) and children under 12 are free with an adult.

SOHOware to Intro New Wireless Gear—SOHOware Inc has announced plans to release a high-speed wireless networking product that is geared toward consumers and small office use. NetBlaster II, which is part of the company's CableFREE product series, will offer up to 11Mbps data flow via RF (radio frequency) standards to Windows-based computers, and provide a range of 300 feet indoors or 1 000 feet in unobstructed space. Existing CableFREE gear only pushes data up to 2Mbps and with a 250-foot range Plans call for the NetBlaster II line to be available in February 2001, with suggested retail pricing of $299 for the wireless bridge and $199 for either a PCI-compatible board or PC Card.

THPS 2 World Championships—Twin Galaxies has announced that it will be hosting the Official World Championships for the PlayStation port of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*. From November 20 to December 20, players will compete to see who can gain the highest scores in this tremendously popular skateboarding title. The skateboarding arena that players will be competing in is the Hangar level of *THPS 2*. The top five players will split $3,000 with $1,000 going to the person with the highest score.

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MARKET TRACKING REPORTS

Information Based Upon NPD Data Recorded November 12–18, 2000

Top 10 Video Game Accessories

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE/ACCESSORY	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	1	MEM EXPANSION PACK/N64	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	NOV '98	$30
2	2	8 MEG MEMORY CARD/PS2	SONY COMPUTER ENT.	OCT '00	$34
3	3	MEMORY CARD VALUE PK/PSX	INTERACT ACCESSORIES	DEC '95	$10
**	4	DUAL SHOCK2 CONTL/PS2/PSX	SONY COMPUTER ENT.	OCT '00	$34
**	5	RFU ADAPTOR/PS2	INTERACT ACCESSORIES	JUN '97	$11
5	6	MEMORY CARD 15X/PSX	MAD CATZ	AUG '96	$11
7	7	RFU ADAPTOR/N64	INTERACT ACCESSORIES	SEP '96	$11
9	8	VISUAL MEMORY UNIT/DC	SEGA OF AMERICA	SEP '99	$25
**	9	DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER/PSX	SONY COMPUTER ENT.	SEP '00	$29
10	10	MEMORY CARD/N64	INTERACT ACCESSORIES	APR '97	$10

***Not in Top 10 Last Week*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • Kristin Barnett-Von Korff • 516 625 2481

Top 10 PlayStation 2 Titles

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	1	MADDEN NFL 2001	ELECTRONIC ARTS	OCT '00	$50
3	2	FANTAVISION	SONY COMPUTER ENT.	OCT '00	$50
2	3	TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	NAMCO	OCT '00	$50
4	4	SSX	ELECTRONIC ARTS	OCT '00	$50
5	5	NASCAR 2001	ELECTRONIC ARTS	NOV '00	$50
6	6	NHL 2001	ELECTRONIC ARTS	OCT '00	$50
7	7	MIDNIGHT CLUB: STREET	ROCKSTAR GAMES	OCT '00	$49
8	8	READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING 2	MIDWAY	OCT '00	$50
9	9	SMUGGLER'S RUN	ROCKSTAR GAMES	OCT '00	$49
**	10	DYNASTY WARRIORS 2	KOEI	OCT '00	$49

*** Not in The Top 10 Last Week*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • Kristin Barnett-Von Korff • 516.625.2481

Top 10 Portable Videogame Titles

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE/PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	1	POKÉMON SILVER/GBC	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	OCT '00	$28
2	2	POKÉMON GOLD/GBC	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	OCT '00	$28
3	3	SUPER MARIO BROS. DLX/GBC	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	MAY '99	$29
**	4	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2/GBC	ACTIVISION	NOV '00	$29
6	5	FROGGER 2/GBC	MAJESCO	SEP '00	$29
**	6	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE/GBC	INFOGRAMES	FEB '00	$7
5	7	POKÉMON YELLOW/GBOY	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	OCT '99	$25
8	8	WARIOLAND 3/GBC	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	JUN '00	$28
9	9	MK & ASHLEY GET CLUE/GBC	ACCLAIM ENTERTAINMENT	JUN '00	$29
7	10	LITTLE MERMAID 2: PIN/GBC	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	SEP '00	$31

***Not In Top 10 Last Week*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • Kristin Barnett Von Korff • 516 625.2481

Top 10 Nintendo 64 Titles

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
**	1	WWF NO MERCY	THQ	NOV '00	$61
1	2	LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	OCT '00	$59
2	3	WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH 007	ELECTRONIC ARTS	OCT '00	$50
3	4	HEY YOU PIKACHU!	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	NOV '00	$80
4	5	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER	ACTIVISION	MAR '00	$50
5	6	MADDEN NFL 2001	ELECTRONIC ARTS	SEP '00	$50
9	7	NFL BLITZ 2001	MIDWAY	SEP '00	$50
8	8	MARIO PARTY 2	NINTENDO OF AMERICA	JAN '00	$49
6	9	SW EPISODE 1: RACER	LUCASARTS ENT.	MAY '99	$10
**	10	TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL	ACCLAIM ENT.	DEC '98	$10

*** Not in The Top 10 Last Week*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • Kristin Barnett Von Korff • 516.625.2481

Top 10 Playstation Titles

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE/PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
**	1	FINAL FANTASY IX	SQUARE EA	NOV '00	$40
1	2	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION	SEP '00	$40
**	3	DRIVER 2	INFOGRAMES	NOV '00	$39
2	4	MADDEN NFL 2001	ELECTRONIC ARTS	AUG '00	$40
3	5	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER	ACTIVISION	SEP '99	$26
4	6	GRAN TURISMO 2	SONY COMPUTER ENT.	DEC '99	$27
5	7	DRIVER	GT INTERACTIVE	JUN '99	$22
6	8	TEKKEN 3	NAMCO	APR '98	$22
10	9	DAVE MIRRA BMX	ACCLAIM ENTERTAINMENT	SEP '00	$40
8	10	SPEC OPS	TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE	APR '00	$9

***Not In Top 10 Last Week*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • Kristin Barnett-Von Korff • 516.625 2481

Top 10 Dreamcast Titles

Ranked on Units Sold

LAST WEEK'S RANK	RANK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	1	SHENMUE	SEGA OF AMERICA	NOV '00	$50
2	2	NBA 2K1	SEGA OF AMERICA	NOV '00	$50
3	3	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION	NOV '00	$47
4	4	NFL 2K1	SEGA OF AMERICA	SEP '00	$49
5	5	CRAZY TAXI	SEGA OF AMERICA	FEB '00	$21
6	6	READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING 2	MIDWAY	OCT '00	$41
**	7	SKIES OF ARCADIA	SEGA OF AMERICA	NOV '00	$51
**	8	TOMB RAIDER: REVELATION	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	MAR '00	$47
8	9	SONIC ADVENTURE	SEGA OF AMERICA	SEP '99	$21
7	10	JET GRIND RADIO	SEGA OF AMERICA	OCT '00	$50

***Not In Top 10 Last Week*

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GameWEEK Interview

Nintendo's

Peter Main

Nintendo of America's Executive VP of Sales and Marketing talks N64, sizes up the competition, and explains why things will be different with GameCube

By Jim Loftus

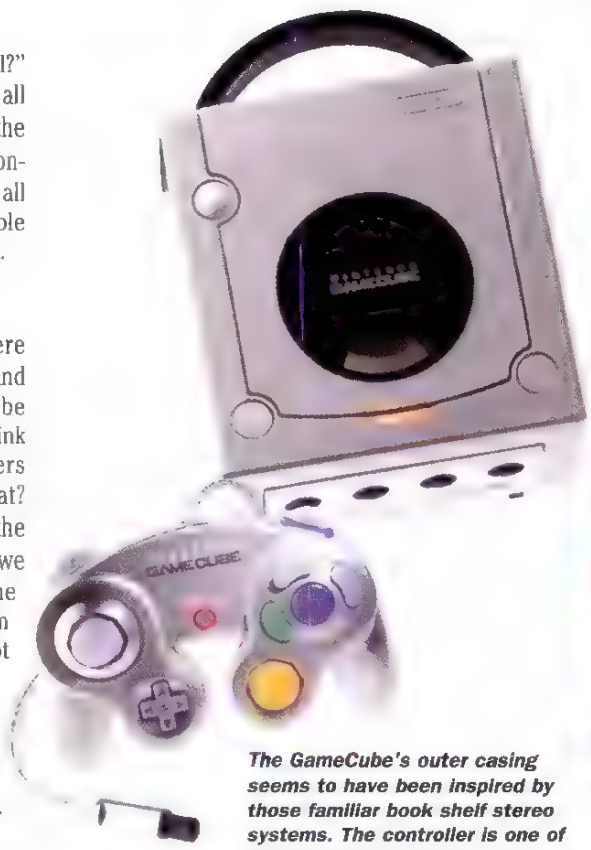
Our elevator reaches the fourteenth floor of the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan. Entering one of the deluxe suites, we are greeted by three eager Nintendo spokespeople and offered a chance to settle on a rather comfy looking couch with a cold drink. Sitting atop a glass-tiered coffee table are two of Nintendo's latest and potentially greatest weapons. On the left, a fully operational silver and orange Game Boy Advance and tiny *Mario Kart* and *F Zero* ROMs stacked at its side; on the right, an unfinished GameCube prototype sitting mere inches from our grasp. This scenario seems to have "test drive" written all over it and we aren't about to argue. Peter Main enters....

GameWEEK: *(eyeing the purple GameCube) So there it is...pretty hard to miss.*

Peter Main: Alive and real, absolutely. Let me tell you where we are and where we're going. First, with some of the things that have been going on over the past several months, a lot of people are wondering "Is the game industry alive and well?" You bet! Why is it alive and well? It all comes down to the experience, the content. Consumers want great content. I mean, after all, that's what it's all about. We like to think we play a big role in getting consumers what they want.

GW: *Such as Pokémon...?*

PM: Oh, yes. When we said we were getting ready with *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver*, everybody said "You've gotta be smoking funny cigarettes if you think you're going to do the kinds of numbers you're talking." And guess what? We sold 1.4 million copies out of the gate, in just one week. Also as we announced, *Stadium* is currently the number one best-selling game on console. Pokémon is certainly hot here, there's no question. It's on fire in Europe as well. The whole issue here in the U.S. was "Will it make it through another holiday?" and it seems to have been answered.



The GameCube's outer casing seems to have been inspired by those familiar book shelf stereo systems. The controller is one of the most comfortable we've ever come across.

GW: *Let's go back to the industry in general for a moment. A lot of developers seem to be placing a huge emphasis on graphics these days. It seems to me the focus is so heavy on the visual side, they're overlooking the number one reason people buy games in the first place: gameplay. Would you share your thoughts?*

PM: What players have been saying to the industry is "Show me a better storyline, give me a reason to play." Our Game Boy Color titles, for instance, don't have the type of visual impact that games on a current console have, but people are playing them like there's no tomorrow. A lot of developers see this and kind of scratch their heads and say "What am I doing wrong here? I don't get it." Again, it all comes down to the experience.

GW: *How's Zelda doing?*

PM: As you know, we shipped *Zelda: Majora's Mask* for the N64 on the same day those other guys launched that machine, uh, what's it called? (laughs) One million pieces of *Zelda* were shipped. That was on Thursday. Through Sunday night-just three days later-400,000+ units were sold. (makes triumphant motion) And in case the recorder didn't pick that up, that was my arm! (everyone laughs) So right now I only have about 600,000 units left in the barn and we're still three weeks away from Thanksgiving. That means I'm going to have to work hard to replenish my supply.

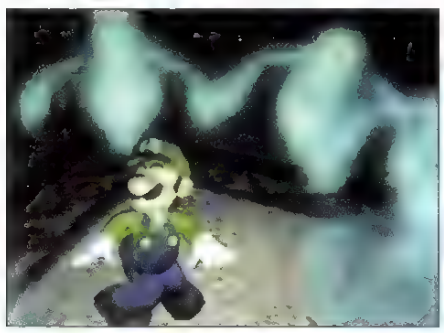
GW: *How big a threat does Microsoft pose to Nintendo right now? What about Sony?*

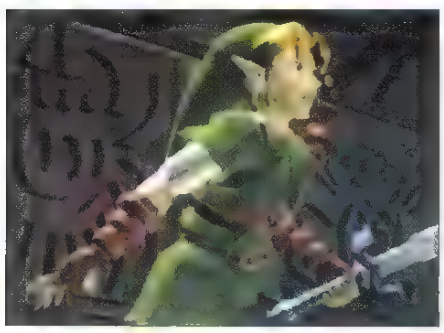
PM: Microsoft is huge, there's no question about that, but the real key is this: they have yet to demonstrate they know what it takes to produce a great game. There are lots of other question marks as well. On the other side, you've got Sony saying "We're not just about games, we're about being the center of home entertainment." I'm not sure exactly what it is doing there, but I do know that it's not part of our goal. Nintendo is about the gaming experience.

GW: *Peter, what's your take on this whole PlayStation 2 buying frenzy? It seems odd for a company like Sony to experience "part shortages" in the critical months leading to the North American launch of a system as huge as the PlayStation 2. Do you think there's a chance Sony might have prefabricated the hardware shortage to induce a buying frenzy?*

PM: It's a very easy thing to say it was possible, but nobody seems to know. We do know, and what the industry has seemed to realize, is that when the machine is held up to the light and dissected, it isn't what [Sony] said it was. On top of that, the limited availability makes it difficult for companies to make a profit. It's catastrophic. There are some forty-odd guys out there who've got an average investment of $3.8 million dollars who are going to have a tough time. And so now the question is, in America, with DVD players selling at

Below: two scenes representing the potential power of GameCube. Spectacular effects such as true fog and eight-way light sourcing are said to be entirely possible.





GW Interview: Peter Main

around $200, will people continue to buy into the hype? There's been a lot of hype for a long time with [PS2]. You and I understand about how that works, and man, I love it—you can beat the drum and really make things happen—but I don't know if it's going to be effective in the long term.

***GW:** Let's talk about the future. Nintendo seems to have learned from some of the mistakes it made with the Nintendo 64, one of which was below par software support. What can we look forward to with GameCube?*

***PM:** It will launch in Japan in July of next year, then in the U.S. three months after that. I can tell you right now we are not going to do things like we did with the N64. We are not going to put it on the market with two or three titles and have the stuff just sort of come in after that. At the same time, we're certainly not going to launch with 28 titles. I mean, having that many titles on opening day is not good for anyone involved. So, let's just say "Not two or three titles, and not 28 titles." We'll be somewhere in between.*

Nintendo's Game Boy Advance, powered by a 32-bit RISC-based processor, will allow for 20 hours of continuous play using two AA batteries.

Even weeks after their initial release, Pokémon Gold and Silver continue to dominate the sales charts.

***GW:** What's going to make the average game buying consumer choose GameCube over the other consoles?*

***PM:** Let me show you. (instructs Nintendo representative to run GameCube videotape footage)*

***GW:** Nice. I noticed you added some new scenes in there...some morphing stuff....*

***PM:** And it's all being done real-time. It's just going to knock your socks off.*

***GW:** What about Game Boy Advance? How's everything coming along there?*

***PM:** One of the beautiful things about the Game Boy Color is that it's always been easy and relatively inexpensive to develop for. Before work started on Game Boy Advance, developers said "Give us more power, give us this, give us that." But they also said "Don't get too crazy...don't make that processor try to replicate what's happening at home." We said "Fine, let's do it then." I am telling you, holding this 32 bit handheld, consumers will say to themselves "Game Boy Advance not only looks better than Game Boy Color with better resolution and a bigger screen, it's also backward-compatible and plays all my old Game Boy Color titles!" It will launch in Japan on March 21 next year and in North America in July.*

Nintendo never fails to impress: even at an average price tag of $80, Hey You, Pikachu! for the N64 is selling in huge quantities.

***GW:** One thing Nintendo always seems to maintain is that magical, "Disney-esque" quality with its franchises. How does it make you feel to be a part of that?*

***PM:** Wonderful. It really does feel wonderful.*

***GW:** Peter, do you think Sega will be able to maintain a course with Dreamcast next year, particularly in the light of losses posted and increased competition in the market place?*

***PM:** There are a lot of rumors. You know, I like [Sega] because they have some great assets; some phenomenal software. They're also doing some nice things with online content. I don't know that they've fully enunciated their strategy, so it's difficult to say what's going to happen to them, really.*

***GW:** Clearly, Nintendo is synonymous with great games and it has been for a long time. To a lesser extent, Sega has also had a similar reputation. Peter, do you see any benefit at all in "cross-pollination" using franchised characters from two major companies? Any chance Nintendo and Sega might team up in the future to develop content for either GameCube or Dreamcast?*

***PM:** Sega has some fantastic assets and sure, I'd love to have a shot at some of them.*

***GW:** A game co-starring Mario and Sonic, for example, would certainly cause an enormous buzz among the gaming community. A few months ago, there were rumors about a dual platform cross-over RPG featuring Sega and Nintendo characters. Can you confirm or deny them?*

***PM:** No comment. (smiles)* **GW**

newsbits

Half-Life To PS2—Sierra Studios announced that it is bringing the popular PC game *Half-Life* to the PlayStation 2 platform. The PS2 version will feature all new levels, as well as single and multiplayer game modes. The vice president of Sierra Studios, Jim Veevaert, said, "The advanced technology in PlayStation 2 will allow us to take *Half-Life*'s heart racing action to the next level... Given the popularity of the franchise, as well as the mind blowing capabilities of the next-generation console, we fully expect Half Life to be a marquee title for the PlaySation 2." *Half-Life* for the PS2 is currently scheduled for a release during the second quarter of 2001.

InterAct Preps Portable PS One Display—InterAct Accessories, Inc. has announced plans for the release of its Mobile Monitor, a liquid-crystal display for Sony's PS One game console, with a December timeframe. The high resolution display offers a full set of controls such as brightness, tint and volume as well as an AC adaptor for the display, a two-plugged car adapter (to power both the monitor and the PS One), stereo speakers, a headphone jack and a second set of audio/video input ports to accommodate the display the output from another device. The Mobile Monitor has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of $149.99.

Jaleco Announces Illbleed—Jaleco USA has announced plans to release *Illbleed*, a horror game for Dreamcast, in February 2001. The title-which is being developed by Climax Graphics, the group behind Blue Stinger-runs the player through seven "theme worlds" that revolve around movies created by "fictitious B movie producer Michael Reynolds." Sega of Japan will be handling the Japanese release.

Sony: PS2 and Super Bowl Parties—Still two months away, Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) has announced plans for its sponsorship of events surrounding Super Bowl XXXV, which is being held in Tampa, Florida, on January 28. Among the events being held:

- Game Before the Game, held on January 25, will have one player from each Super Bowl team take each other on in the PlayStation 2 version of *NFL GameDay 2001*.
- The 989 Sports NFL Players Party, January 26-28, is a variety of events that enable fans and players to interact, offer comedian performances, hand out autographs and giveaways, and provide interactive kiosks with *NFL GameDay 2001* for PS2.
- The Locker Room Challenge pits eight players in a *NFL GameDay 2001* for PS2 tournament.

SCEA indicates that a portion of the proceeds from the events will benefit Special Olympics.

STOCK INDEX

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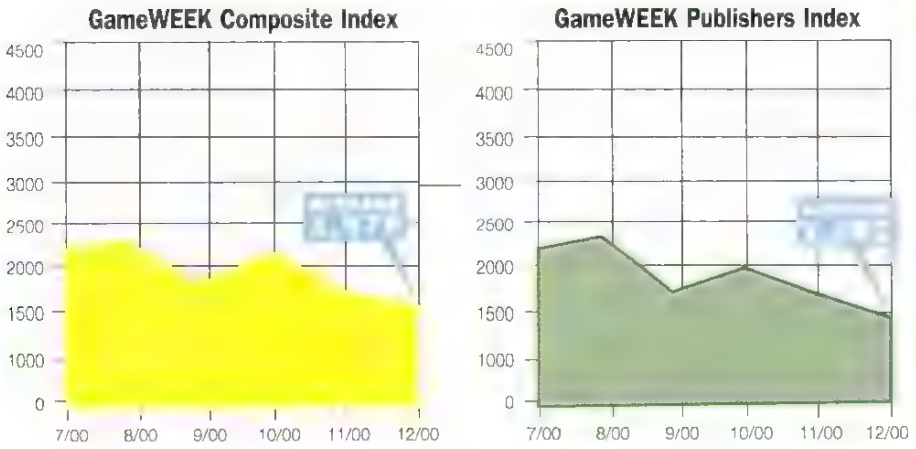
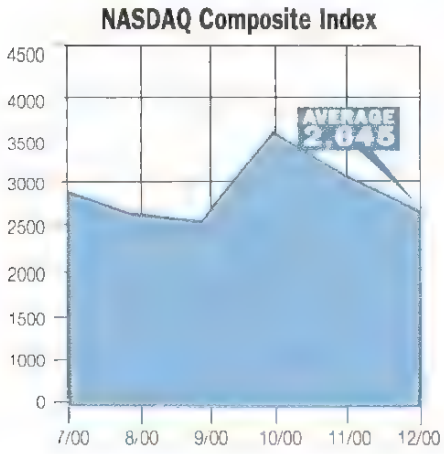
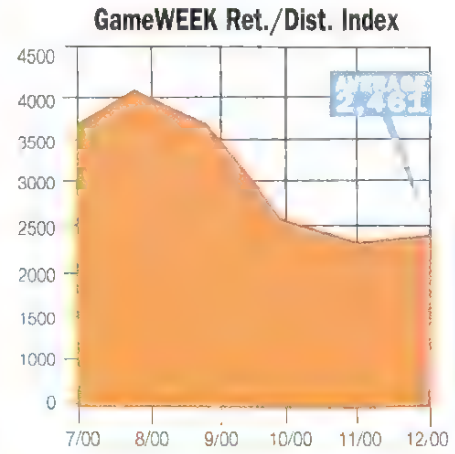
Index Comparisons







Summary of Results

Advances: 15 ***Declines:*** 44 ***Unchanged:*** 4

GAINERS	% CHANGE
Infogrames	20.00%
Walmart	13.28%
Sears	9.37%
CenterSpan	6.94%
Macromedia	6.54%

LOSERS	% CHANGE
Cirrus Logic	-39.29%
Voxware Inc	-34.62%
Beyond.Com Corp	-31.25%
3DO	-28.41%
Advanced Micro Devices Inc	-25.83%

INDEX COMPARISONS	11.24.00	12.1.00	NET CHANGE	% CHANGE
GameDaily Composite Index	1754.82	1575.00	-179.82	-10.25%
GameDaily Publishers Index	1734.52	1481.99	-252.53	-14.56%
GameDaily Retailers/Distributors	2266.55	2460.70	194.15	8.57%
NASDAQ Composite	2904.38	2645.29	-259.09	8.92%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	10470.23	10373.54	-96.69	-0.92%
S&P 500 Stock Index	1341.77	1315.23	26.54	-1.98%
Russell 2000	471.87	456.84	-15.03	-3.19%

Source: CNET Investor (investor.cnet.com) "This information is based on sources believed to be reliable, and while extensive efforts are made to assure its accuracy, no guarantees can be made." CNET Investor assumes no liability for any inaccuracies."

EXCH	TICKER	COMPANY	52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	PE RATIO	11/24/00 CLOSE	12/1/00 CLOSE	% CHANGE IN PERIOD	% CHANGE IN YEAR
PUBLISHERS AND MANUFACTURERS									
NASD	TDDD	3D Labs Inc Ltd	10.50	1.37		2.06	1.81	-12.12%	-69.15%
NASD	TDFX	3Dfx	14.50	2.12	-	2.94	2.53	-13.83%	-74.53%
NASD	THDO	3DO	17.12	1.87		2.75	1.97	-28.41%	-78.28%
NASD	AKLM	Acclaim	8.06	0.84	-	0.94	0.88	-6.67%	-82.82%
NASD	ATVI	Activision	18.25	5.37	-	11.38	12.06	6.04%	21.22%
NASD	MIGS	McGlen Internet Group	15.00	0.37		0.38	0.38	0.00%	-90.77%
NYSE	AMD	Advanced Micro Devices Inc	48.50	9.93	5.8	20.81	15.44	-25.83%	-46.65%
NASD	AAPL	Apple Computer	75.18	16.12	7.8	19.31	17.06	-11.65%	-66.81%
NYSE	BDE	Brilliant Digital Enmt Inc	14.93	1.37		1.94	1.63	-16.13%	-58.73%
NYSE	CRUS	Cirrus Logic	47.67	9.87	7.6	37.06	22.50	-39.29%	69.81%
NYSE	CPQ	Compaq Comp.	34.87	18.16	25.1	24.69	22.80	-7.65%	-15.75%
NASD	CREAF	Creative Labs	38.81	11.62		14.31	12.56	-12.23%	27.70%
NASD	DELL	Dell	59.68	18.44	22.5	24.38	18.44	-24.36%	63.85%
NYSE	DIS	Disney	43.87	23.37	52.6	29.75	30.00	0.84%	2.56%
NASD	EIDSY	Eidos Interactive †††	21.00	2.50	-	2.97	3.00	1.05%	-82.46%
NASD	ERTS	Electronic Arts	62.21	24.50	395.0	44.00	39.50	-10.23%	-52.98%
NASD	FGM	Infogrames	25.62	4.31	-	6.25	7.50	20.00%	9.42%
AMEX	HAS	Hasbro	24.25	9.00	23.9	11.50	11.69	1.63%	-38.28%
NYSE	HWP	Hewlett Packard	77.75	30.50	17.9	35.56	32.19	-9.49%	-22.04%
NYSE	IBM	IBM	134.93	86.93	23.3	99.94	95.63	-4.32%	-11.36%
NASD	INTC	Intel	75.81	34.13	22.9	43.94	34.13	-22.33%	-17.08%
NASD	IENT	Interactive Magic	6.68	0.43	-	0.75	0.56	-25.00%	-70.97%
NASD	INGR	Intergraph	9.00	3.62	-	7.00	6.13	-12.50%	28.95%
NASD	IPLY	Interplay	4.68	1.56	-	3.63	3.63	0.00%	23.40%
NASD	LOGIY	Logitech	39.00	9.00	33.5	30.75	28.50	-7.32%	3.40%
NASD	MACR	Macromedia	120.87	42.25	139.3	64.06	68.25	6.54%	-6.67%
NASD	MVSN	Macrovision	108.25	21.12	119.4	49.13	47.75	-2.80%	29.05%
NYSE	MAT	Matte Inc	15.50	8.93		13.19	12.63	-4.27%	3.81%
NASD	MSFT	Microsoft	119.93	48.43	32.2	69.94	56.63	-19.03%	-51.50%
NYSE	MWY	Midway	24.87	6.06	-	8.25	8.19	-0.76%	-65.80%
NASD	RCOT	Recoton	16.93	5.43	168.8	9.88	8.44	-14.56%	-8.78%
NASD	EGAM	eGames Inc.	4.25	0.37	-	0.50	0.53	6.25%	-83.33%
NYSE	SIII	S3 Inc	24.81	6.50	-	9.38	9.38	0.00%	-18.48%
NYSE	SNE	Sony Corp	157.37	72.06		75.75	74.56	-1.57%	-73.81%
NASD	TTWO	Take Two	18.93	8.00	11.6	9.38	9.88	5.33%	-23.67%
NASD	THQI	THQ	39.25	7.62	29.6	18.00	18.97	5.38%	18.41%
NASD	CSCC	CenterSpan	35.37	4.00		9.00	9.63	6.94%	-69.92%
NASD	UPRO	Uproar	35.00	1.12	-	1.88	1.44	-23.33%	-94.28%
AMEX	VIA	Viacom	76.06	43.43	-	53.44	52.94	-0.94%	-12.41%
NASD	VOXW	Voxware Inc	13.25	0.65	-	1.63	1.06	-34.62%	3.03%
RETAILERS AND DISTRIBUTORS									
NASD	AMZN	Amazon.Com Inc	113.00	19.37		28.94	24.63	-14.90%	-67.65%
NASD	AMES	Ames Stores	34.92	1.87	3.6	2.66	2.06	-22.35%	92.83%
NYSE	BKS	Barnes & Noble	29.93	16.31	24.2	27.94	28.50	2.01%	38.18%
NYSE	BBY	Best Buy	88.87	25.37	14.9	33.50	27.50	-17.91%	-45.27%
NASD	BYND	Beyond.Com Corp	13.50	0.25	-	0.50	0.34	-31.25%	-95.60%
NYSE	CC	Circuit City	65.18	11.56	7.7	13.50	12.25	-9.26%	-72.82%
NASD	COOL	Cyberian Outpost Inc	15.93	1.03		1.75	1.50	14.29%	84.91%
NASD	DRIV	Digital River Inc	43.62	3.25	-	4.88	4.09	-16.03%	87.71%
NASD	EBAY	eBay Inc	127.50	29.25	289.6	36.94	34.75	-5.92%	-72.24%
NASD	ELBO	Electronics Boutique	25.37	12.75	20.0	17.75	16.38	-7.75%	-9.03%
NASD	GGUY	Good Guys	11.00	2.06	-	4.63	3.50	-24.32%	-61.38%
AMEX	GIG	GTR Group	3.75	0.62	-	0.75	0.75	0.00%	73.91%
NASD	IMMR	Immersion	79.00	7.12	-	10.44	9.44	9.58%	-75.41%
NYSE	KM	K Mart Corp	12.25	5.06	-	6.06	5.63	-7.22%	-44.10%
NYSE	MAY	May Dept Stores	34.62	19.18	11.5	27.81	28.44	2.25%	-11.99%
NASD	NAVR	Navarre	9.56	1.06	-	1.53	1.25	-18.37%	-78.26%
NASD	RADA	Radica Games	10.50	2.00		2.06	2.00	-3.03%	-71.93%
NYSE	RSH	Radio Shack	79.50	35.06	27.8	49.25	47.00	-4.57%	4.45%
NYSE	S	Sears	43.50	25.25	7.2	29.88	32.68	9.37%	7.59%
NASD	SPLS	Staples	28.75	10.25	19.2	12.00	12.31	2.60%	-40.66%
NYSE	TOY	Toys R Us	20.00	9.75	11.1	19.56	18.38	-6.07%	28.38%
NYSE	WMT	Walmart	70.25	41.43	36.8	45.19	51.19	13.28%	-25.95%
NASD	ZANY	Zany-Brainy	12.75	1.18	-	1.72	1.50	-12.73%	-85.28%

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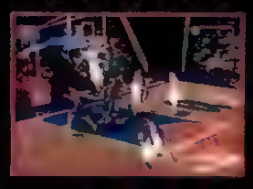

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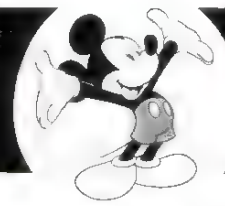

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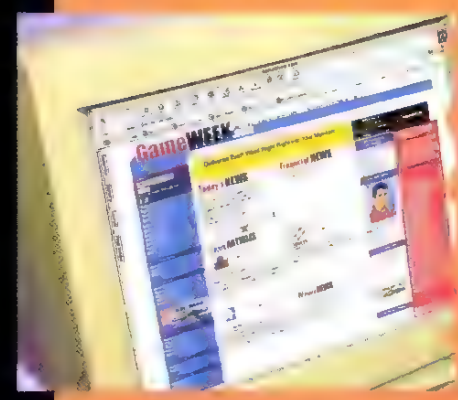

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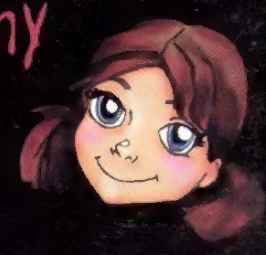

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